GUIDE TO THE Everyday Witch TAROT

Guide to the Everyday Witch Tarot helps you discover the positive possibilities that come to light when you read the cards. Deborah Blake's down-to-earth explanations include questions and answers, card meanings, and spread ideas. This book makes reading tarot cards simple—especially for those who aren't versed in esoteric symbols and lore. Discover classic tarot art updated for the modern world and uplifting ideas that support empowerment and hope.

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GUIDE TO THE EVERYDAY WITCH TAROT Blake

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GUIDE TO THE Everyday Witch TAROT

Deborah Blake

Art by Elisabeth Alba

THIS WAY
THAT WAY

Bobbie Hodges

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★★★

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GUIDE TO THE Everyday Witch TAROT

Deborah Blake
Art by Elisabeth Alba

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Introduction

Once upon a time, in a land far away (we'll call it Minnesota), there was a wonderful publisher of all things esoteric, known as Llewellyn. You may have heard of them, since they put out a lot of very cool books—and, not coincidentally, the occasional tarot card deck.

As it happens, one of the people who wrote some of those cool books for them was a witch named Deborah; that is to say, me. (So you see, I know this story is true.)

When I was working on my seventh book for Llewellyn, a charming tome called *The Witch's Broom*, and trying to find an idea for the cover, a brilliant editor known as Elysia the Magnificent discovered a picture of an amusing old retro postcard. This postcard featured a black cat, a traditional witch's black pointed hat, and, of course, a broom. We loved it, everyone else loved it, and an artist took that idea and turned it into what became the cover of that book, whereupon all those who gazed upon it also loved it. (Or so I have been told.)

After some time passed, I received an unexpected message from an enchantress named Barbara Moore, who has produced many a fabulous deck of tarot cards herself and works for the acquisitions department at Llewellyn. "We have an idea!" she said through the magical power of email. "And we thought of you."

That idea, as it turned out, was to create a tarot deck based on the adorable retro look of the cover from my book. They had discussed such a venture and wished for someone with a slightly whimsical bent who could still be serious about the art and soul of the tarot to help them bring it into being. Might I be interested in such a task? And was I at all familiar with the tarot, in particular the classic Rider-Waite deck upon which this new one would be based?

There might have been some chuckling on my end after I'd picked myself up off the floor. You see, I had been reading tarot professionally for many a year. The cards I use, as you may have guessed by now, are in fact that self-same Rider-Waite deck.

I mulled the idea for a bit and finally decided that I was too intrigued to pass it up. In fact, I was captivated by the challenge (although, I will confess, here where no one is listening, that I might have been a tad intimidated by the scope of the task... you won't tell, will you?). And so I replied to the enchantress's message and said, "Holy heck, *yes*! Sign me up!"

But this was only the beginning of the journey. After all, if we were to create the perfect deck, we would need the perfect artist. Barbara searched through all the kingdom, looking

high and low, and one day she found a treasure. That treasure's name was Elisabeth Alba, and she was an illustrator of unmatched skill and grace. (She's also really pretty and very nice, but let's not mention that. We wouldn't want her to get a swelled head now, would we?)

So Barbara sent me a magical link so that I might gaze upon Elisabeth's work, and I said, "Holy heck, *yes*! Please get her to sign up too!" And so it began.

Fortunately, Elisabeth possessed an uncanny ability to take my vision for the pictures on each card and transmute them through the alchemy of her art into something beautiful and true. We used a lot of those same retro-looking classic witches with their black hats and black cats and brooms. (There might have also been some white cats and calico cats. There is no controlling cats, as we all know.) Add in some fairy-tale images and my own personal interpretations of the cards, arrived at after many years of using them, and you have this deck.

The end result, we hope, is both pleasing to the eye and functional for the user. If we have succeeded, then this fairy tale will have a very happy ending indeed.

Chapter One

As I mentioned in the introduction, this deck is based on the classic Rider-Waite deck that many people are already familiar with. The original Rider-Waite deck, written by Arthur E. Waite and illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith, was published by the Rider Company in 1910. But early tarot decks are thought to date back to the Renaissance, where they were used to play a complicated card game, and each deck was painstakingly painted by hand.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, tarot began to be used to tell the future, and nowadays many people collect decks by the dozens, either for their beauty or to tell their fortunes or even to gain insight into their own personal internal world. Some folks use them for fun, and others take them very seriously indeed. Neither approach is wrong; the cards have many functions, and you can use them in whichever way most fits your needs and desires.

The classic deck, like this one, contains seventy-eight cards. These cards are divided into two groups: the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. There are twenty-two Major Arcana cards and fifty-six Minor Arcana cards. The Major Arcana is numbered starting with zero (the Fool) and ending with twenty-one (the World). These cards represent the Big Stuff: life, death, love, huge shifts and changes—the things that rock our world from time to time.

The Minor Arcana, on the other hand, is more likely to address the daily issues we all cope with—home, career, health, happiness, love. Okay, love is in there twice. It's harder to control than cats.

The Minor Arcana is broken into four suits: Cups, Wands, Pentacles, and Swords. Within each of these suits are cards from ace to ten, as well as the page, knight, queen, and king. The page, knight, queen, and king are also collectively known as the court cards.

Each of the four suits is associated with particular aspects of life and the natural world. (Although there is overlap, of course, so that in a reading that contains a question about love, there are traits from each of the suits that will come into play, not just Cups.) These are the generally accepted correspondences:

Swords: air (communication, the mind, truth, problems and solutions)

Cups: water (emotions, creativity, relationships, family and friends)

Wands: fire (career, goals, passion, will, desires, projects)

Pentacles: earth (money, prosperity, the physical world, health/body, work, resources)

In general, the more Major Arcana cards that show up in a reading, the more likely it is that the reading has come at an important juncture in the life of the one for whom the reading is being done. But Minor Arcana cards also carry critical messages for those who are willing to look deep and pay attention.

About This Deck and How to Use It

Clearly this deck doesn't look exactly like the conventional Rider-Waite one. The images are sometimes close to the original (such as the Five of Pentacles) and sometimes very different (like the Hierophant), although the cards can be used in exactly the same way as any other seventy-eight-card deck you are accustomed to practicing with.

Like other decks that are variations on the original Rider-Waite, this one has its own particular theme. You will see many classical witches with their sturdy brooms, pointed black hats, and black cats, but also some elders—queen witches and sages—as well as younger teen witches. There are also some figures that are left purposely androgynous, in the hope that everyone will feel included and see themselves somewhere in these cards. The deck's theme honors traditional witches, as

well as some witchy themes from movies and fairy tales and cats, of course. (Plus a few dogs. Shhh. Don't tell the cats.)

Another difference you might spot is that even the more traditionally negative cards, such as the Tower, Death, and the Ten of Swords, have a more positive spin put on them. I have found over my years as a tarot reader that many people are afraid of these cards and become alarmed when they show up in a reading. While it is true that the appearance of such cards is rarely happy news, as such, there is almost always a good side to the message they bring.

For instance, the Death card is rarely symbolic of actual death; it has happened only once in all my years of reading, and even then, the person the reading was for already had an inkling that someone close to her was going to die soon. The Death card usually heralds a dramatic change in circumstance—the "death" of something (a relationship, a career, a particular dream)—but that "death" almost always opens the door for something new and better. So I have purposely written my descriptions of the cards to reflect the way I would read them, focusing on the lessons to be learned and the positive possibilities that may come to light through the reading.

We have also tried to make the cards and their descriptions as accessible and easy to understand as possible, updating them for the modern world (despite some of the classic images we use). One of the problems people sometimes have with the older Rider-Waite imagery and descriptions is that they can be difficult to decipher and apply to today's issues. Hopefully, this deck will prove simpler to use, even for those not versed in eso-

teric symbols, astrology, numerology, or the Qabalah. (Raises hand.)

You can use this deck the same way you would use any other, but hopefully the touch of whimsical in the pictures will remind you that tarot reading can be fun, even when it is absolutely serious.

Don't feel that you need to stick strictly to my interpretations of the cards as you will read them in this book. After all, tarot reading is a chance to let your own intuition run free, so if your interpretation is different than mine, it may still be correct for you or the person you are reading for. When I started reading I went "by the book," as it were, but over the years, as I've become more comfortable with the cards, I find that my interpretations often vary quite a bit from the original "official" take—and yet it works every time.

How to Do a Reading

Learning the Cards

If you are not an experienced reader, the first thing you will want to do is become better acquainted with the cards. (After all, you wouldn't start driving without learning what all the gears and buttons did, would you?) There are a number of different ways to do this, and you can choose to do all of them or pick the ones that appeal to you the most.

- Go through the entire deck, one card at a time. Look at them and get a sense for what they mean

to you (you can even write it down if you want), and then compare what you came up with to the interpretations in the book. Or do the reverse: start with the book's interpretations, then see if your own take varies in any way.

- Start with the Major Arcana cards and get comfortable with them.
- Look at the Minor Arcana cards one suit at a time, seeing how they progress from ace to ten.
- Look at the Minor Arcana cards together, comparing the aces for all, then the twos, etc.
- One good way to get comfortable with the deck is to pull one random card every day. You can do this methodically (writing the card down in a journal, for instance, along with your interpretation and/or what the book says it means) or randomly (ask any question and pull a card—see what happens).
- Alternately, you can set aside some time once a week, perhaps in ritual space or in a quiet time first or last thing in the day, and go through the entire deck. This is a great way to learn the cards rapidly.
- Practice coming up with your own interpretations, and then compare them to the ones I've written out. Listen to your gut as you do a practice reading, and see if you can hone your own intuitive gifts.
- Practice with a friend. If you know someone else who is more experienced with the tarot than you are, it

can be helpful to have them go over the cards with you and show you how they do a reading. Alternately, if you have a friend who is also new at reading tarot, you can practice on each other or study the cards together to make learning about the deck even more fun.

Doing a Reading

A note about reading for yourself as opposed to reading for others:

It has been my experience that many people are either good at reading for themselves or reading for others, but not both. In fact, it is somewhat ironic that most of the truly psychic tarot readers I know—including myself, alas—can't read for themselves in any useful way. I can pull one card to get a quick answer about a question, and I occasionally receive something useful, but for the most part, if I need a reading, I have to ask one of my friends. (It's very annoying.) My gift is in reading for others, and it has served me well for years. But when I try to read for myself, if I am feeling optimistic, all the cards are fabulous. If I am feeling pessimistic, all the cards reflect that too. Did I mention it was annoying?

On the other hand, many of the folks who read for themselves quite well aren't very good at reading for others. Go figure. Of course, there are plenty of people who can do both, and kudos if you are one of them. But don't be discouraged if it turns out that tarot only works for you one way or the other. Sometimes that's just the way it is.

Also, just as with any other art or skill, some people have a natural aptitude and others have to work harder to get results. You don't have to be a psychic to read tarot cards, although you may find that the cards will help you to open up to any gifts you do have.

If you don't have an innate gift, you may have to practice more or focus on some of the other aspects of using the tarot. For instance, Mary K. Greer wrote a wonderful book called *Tarot for Your Self: A Workbook for Personal Transformation* (originally published in 1984 by Newcastle Publishing, an updated version came out in 2002 from New Page Books) that uses tarot as a tool for self-exploration and growth. As I said before, there is no wrong way to use the cards!

How you do a reading will vary depending on whether it is for yourself or for someone else (the one the reading is for is called the querent, whether it is you or another), but much of the basics stay the same.

1. All readings start with a question or questions. I find that it is best to focus on one or at most two questions in order not to muddy the waters. If you are reading for yourself, you can take a moment to carefully phrase the question in your mind or write it down on a piece of paper. For instance, you can ask things like "Is a relationship with X in my best interests?" or "Should I switch from the job I hate to the job I like that pays less?" It is also fine to just ask "What do I need to know today?" or "Is there

something going on that I need to focus on?" Other than these types of questions, however, try not to be vague. For instance, asking "Is this a good job?" may not get you useful answers (what does "good" mean?), whereas asking "Is this the right job for me at this time?" is much more likely to get you a definitive yes or no.

2. When reading for others, the same rule applies. Some people may not want to tell you their question as a way of testing you. If you are just starting out, I don't suggest this, since it will just make things harder. Once you are more experienced, you will probably find that it makes no difference whatsoever if you know the question from the start; I have this happen all the time, and I can usually figure out by about the third card what the person is asking about (career, love, etc.). Of course, some of that might be that whole "I am a psychic" thing. Either way, you will soon discover for yourself if you are more comfortable knowing the querent's question ahead of time, and it is okay to tell people that you need them to share it with you. It might also help you to get them to clarify their question(s) before starting if it turns out that they aren't being specific enough, as with the job question I mentioned above.
3. Keep in mind that when you do a reading for someone else, they will probably be talking about important

personal issues. NEVER share with anyone other than the querent any details of a reading unless they have given you permission to do so. I like to think of it like being a counselor. What's said during a tarot reading stays in the tarot reading.

4. Decide which spread is most appropriate for the question(s) being asked, as well as the amount of time you have for the reading. Simple questions can often be answered with simple spreads or even a one-card pull from the deck. More complicated issues will require something more detailed, like the Celtic Cross spread. (You can find out more about specific spreads in chapter 4.)
5. Shuffle the cards. There is no one right way to do this, and different people use different techniques. Because of their larger size and the number of cards, some people find tarot cards difficult to shuffle in the normal way one would use with a standard deck of playing cards. You can try mixing them all together on the table in front of you and then straightening them out. (I don't do this because I like to keep all the cards lined up in the same direction, but it is certainly simple and it works.)

   You can divide the deck in half and slowly shuffle them together with the long sides together rather than the shorter ends. This is what I do, and I find it makes the cards easier to handle. You can also shuffle

them in smaller piles and then mix the piles together. Most people who do readings for others have the querent shuffle the cards for their own reading (so that the cards can get in tune with the querent), but it has been my experience that this can be awkward and isn't really necessary.

When I do a reading, I shuffle the cards myself while concentrating on opening myself to whatever information is pertinent to the reading, and then I give the cards facedown to the querent and instruct them to put their dominant hand (right if they are right-handed, for instance) on top of the cards and think about their question. When they feel ready, I then have them divide the deck into three piles and restack them in any order they choose, while still keeping the cards facing in the same direction. This has always worked for me and is much simpler than making people shuffle cards they aren't comfortable with.

Again, there is no wrong way, and you may just want to experiment until you discover which approach works best for you. If all else fails, you can just spread the deck out facedown on the table and pull cards out at random.

6. Lay out the cards. Again, there are a number of different approaches to doing this, and all of them are equally appropriate. Some people lay out all the cards

at once, faceup, and then scan the entire reading. Others lay them facedown all at once and turn up one card at a time. Personally, I like to put down one card at a time and concentrate on it, slowly building the reading one card at a time. When all the cards are on the table, I will then go back and see if there is a bigger picture and summarize it for the querent. If you don't already have a particular style of laying out the cards, you may want to experiment with a few different approaches until you find the one that works best for you.

7. Interpret the cards. This, of course, is the heart of the reading. If you are just learning, it is fine to consult the book as you go. Almost everyone starts this way. Once you have more experience, you may want to go with your own intuitive interpretation and only look up a card if you are stuck or confused. If you lay out cards one at a time as I do, you may find that occasionally a card early on in the reading doesn't make much sense until you get a little further along. If you are reading for yourself, make an effort not to project your own expectations and fears onto the cards. If you are reading for someone else, it sometimes helps to ask periodically, "Is this making sense to you?" It is fine to listen to feedback from the querent, such as "I think that King of Pentacles represents my husband, not my boss, because he controls all the money

in our house." Don't be afraid to trust your own intuition just because whatever you come up with doesn't match up with what I've written in the book. After all, there are lots of different circumstances, and no two readings are alike. The book is a general guide, not a textbook that lays out all the "right" answers.

8. Look for patterns. No matter whether you are laying the cards down one at a time or all at once, it can help if you look for patterns: repeated numbers, a predominance of one suit over all the others, or lots of Major Arcana cards. Having many Major Arcana cards in a reading usually indicates that the querent is at a major turning point. Important decisions are being made; big changes are coming. I always tell people that these kinds of readings mean *pay attention!*

   If the suits aren't represented equally, it may mean that there is an imbalance in the querent's life or it may be because the question being asked focuses on one particular area, such as love (which may result in a lot of Cups cards) or money (lots of Pentacles). If one particular number repeats, then check the common issues usually associated with those numbers in the tarot deck:

   Aces: new beginnings or opportunities

   Twos: relationships or choices

   Threes: teamwork or creativity

Fours: stagnation, stability

Fives: chaos, conflict, loss

Sixes: community, relationships, help and support

Sevens: reassessment, reflection, planning, decisions

Eights: power and movement (or the lack thereof)

Nines: solitude, independence, isolation, the individual

Tens: completion, something coming to an end, fulfillment

Remember that, as with most other things in life, practice makes perfect. The more time you spent with the cards, the more comfortable with them you will become and the better they will work for you. Whether you are simply playing around with them for fun, using them to further your understanding of the inner workings of your own life, or employing them to invite guidance for yourself or others, the tarot cards will work best for you if you are willing to devote a little time and energy to becoming better acquainted with them. Treat the cards with affection and respect, as you would any valued tool, and they will serve you well for many years to come.

Chapter Two

Reading the tarot can be a little confusing at first, especially since there are a number of different approaches and every book (and deck) you get may give you instructions that contradict the others. Try not to sweat the small stuff; remember there is no one "right" way to use the tarot. To help you get started, here is a chapter full of helpful hints and clarifications, as well as three simple spells to use with your cards if you are of the witchy persuasion.

Common Questions and Answers

What is a signifier and should you use one?

A signifier is a card used to represent the querent, and it is used in addition to the other cards in a reading (most commonly in detailed readings involving a number of cards, such as

the Celtic Cross). The signifier is usually picked out before the reading begins, and is often chosen for its similarity in some way with the querent, such as a queen card for a woman. This is an older way of doing a reading, and I tend not to use it because then whichever card is being used as a signifier is no longer in the deck to be used. I simply use the first card I lay down to represent the person being read for, but you can do it either way.

The only exception to the "don't bother to use a signifier" rule is when one card just seems to jump out of the deck while you are shuffling. When that happens, it tends to indicate that this card should be given special attention and set out at the beginning of the reading.

What is a clarifier and should you use one?

Once you have laid out the entire spread (for instance, ten cards in the case of the Celtic Cross), there are times when the querent's questions haven't been completely answered or there is still some confusion. On those occasions it is common practice to use a clarifier—an additional card picked to clarify the situation.

Some readers prefer not to use clarifiers, believing that they make things more confusing rather than less. Others will use them but like to limit the clarifiers to one or two cards. That's my usual approach, since I have found clarifiers helpful on occasion, but it isn't unusual for a querent to want to continue picking out more and more cards in order to either ask additional questions or else avoid facing the conclusions presented by the original cards of the reading.

I strongly suggest that you never do more than two clarifiers, and one is better yet, if they are needed at all (and they often aren't). If the clarifier, when chosen, doesn't seem to make any sense in relation to the question asked, I tend to interpret that as the universe saying, "Stop asking me, darn it! I already gave you all the information you need." Clarifiers can be chosen in two ways: either the next card in the deck can be used or the cards can be spread out to enable the querent to choose the one that calls to them.

What are reversed cards, and should I use them?

There are two basic ways to handle the tarot deck when you shuffle the cards. Some people, like me, purposely keep the cards all lined up in the same direction (or turn the cards right-side up before they lay them down on the table). Others shuffle so that some of the cards are right-side up and some are upside down. If a card is upside down when it is placed on the table, it is known as a reversed card. Reversed cards are generally interpreted as having the opposite meaning or a negative view of the card when it is right-side up; for instance, if the Four of Swords is seen as "resting" when upright, it might be interpreted as "procrastinating" when reversed.

Lots of people use reversed cards, and it is somewhat traditional. Personally, I don't like them. I find them confusing and downbeat, as well as unnecessary. If I pull the Four of Swords in a reading, I can usually tell which one of those meanings it has in this particular reading just by using my intuition, and I think that the querent finds negative cards both bewildering

and discouraging. If you're not sure whether or not you want to use reversed cards, I suggest you try it a few times with and without them, and see which approach works best for you.

What if I get bad news, a bunch of scary cards, or answers I (or the person I am reading for) don't like?

I start every reading by saying, "Remember that nothing is written in stone." A reading represents the probabilities as they exist at the time of that particular reading. Many times a reading provides the querent with information that, if they choose to use it to change their direction or patterns of behavior, can result in a completely different outcome than the one predicted.

Also, circumstances outside of our control (other people's choices, for instance) can dramatically change the end results. So don't be too discouraged if you see things in a reading that are upsetting or unpleasant. Instead, try to look at them as warnings that will allow you to prepare for the worst or even prevent it. What are the cards trying to tell you? What can you learn that might lead to a better, more positive outcome?

Remember that even the most frightening cards can have their positive sides, depending on the way they are approached. The Devil may be a warning not to trust someone; if you are paying attention, it could save you some trouble and heartache. Try to keep an open mind and put as positive a spin on the reading as you can. If the cards are truly dismal, it is probably a not-so-subtle hint that things need to change in a big way. And if so, then the querent probably knew that coming in and just needed a nudge from the universe to help them face up to it.

Before doing a reading, do I need to cast a magical circle or only read in sacred space?

Not at all. Many people who do readings aren't witches and may never practice magic of any kind or do rituals other than brushing their teeth before bed. If you are a magical practitioner and you are doing a reading for yourself or someone else about an important issue, it certainly won't hurt to start by creating sacred space or doing a formal ritual, but it isn't necessary.

What I do suggest, however, is that you follow a few simple steps if you are going to be doing any kind of serious tarot reading. The first is to make sure you are grounded and centered. Take a few deep breaths, consciously let go of the troubles of the mundane world outside the reading, and make sure you are focused on the work at hand. If you like incense or sage smudge sticks, burning some while you do the reading might help to get you in the proper frame of mind. Some people like to burn a candle on the table, if it won't get in the way, or use a special cloth to lay the cards out on.

In short, set the mood and remind yourself that you are doing something outside the realm of your everyday routine. It is also important to make sure that you have enough space to lay out the cards and that you won't be interrupted in the middle of a reading. Turn off the phone, shut off distracting noises like television or radio (although it is fine to play quiet meditative music in the background), and ask your kids/spouse/friends to not disturb you. Tarot works best when you can give it your full attention.

What if I can't think of a specific question, but I have the feeling that there is something going on?

It is always okay to just ask, "What do I need to know?" Sometimes it is interesting to see what turns up when you aren't trying to be specific.

What if the reading just doesn't make any sense? The cards are all nonsense, and none of them seem to have anything to do with my question.

There are a couple of things that could be happening here. Sometimes you're just not in the right frame of mind to be reading; if you're too upset, scattered, or tired, you're likely to end up with marginal results. Wait, and try again later. It could be that you're asking the wrong question or that the question you think you're asking isn't the one you really want to know the answer to. (I once did a reading for a woman who told me she wanted to know about career issues. I got four or five cards in and realized that the cards had nothing to do with career success and everything to do with love. She finally admitted that this was what she had really wanted to ask about but had been too afraid of the answers to try. But she couldn't fool the cards, and as soon as we looked at the question she was really asking, they suddenly made much more sense.)

Or you may be one of those people who can only read for yourself and not others, or the reverse. If the reading isn't working, there isn't much you can do. Put the cards aside and try again in a day or two.

What does it mean if I do a number of readings (for myself or others) and the same darned cards keep turning up over and over? Am I doing something wrong?

Probably not. If the same cards turn up in multiple readings, it probably means that the querent hasn't changed any of their patterns and behaviors since the last reading, and therefore their problems have stayed exactly the same. I have had clients who came to me repeatedly for help with the same issue and got frustrated because I never had any different answers for them. But if they didn't pay any attention to the wisdom offered to them the first, second, or third time around, the outcome was going to remain unchanged, and so would the cards. Once the querent finally does something to affect positive change, I assure you that the cards will change, too.

Do I have to be psychic to read the tarot?

Nope. Obviously, if you have some kind of psychic ability, reading the tarot will probably come more easily to you. But, if they are open to doing so, everyone has the capacity to tap into their own intuitive inner voice, as well as access wisdom from the outside (call it god/goddess/spirit/the universe/guides—whatever term you are more comfortable with). In fact, the tarot is a great tool for helping you do just that.

Some Tarot Extras: Three Spells for Use with the Tarot

A Consecration Spell for New Cards

If you are of the witchy persuasion, you probably consecrate your magical tools before using them for the first time. It is a nice idea to do the same with a new (or "new to you") deck of tarot cards. Consecrating the cards simply means that you are dedicating them to positive use and asking the gods/the universe to bless the cards.

It is traditional to wrap tarot cards in a silk cloth—it doesn't have to be large or expensive, although it is nice if the cloth is big enough to also be used under the cards as they are spread out on a table for a reading—and keep them in a special box or pouch. If you are using the cards for serious readings, I suggest that you do this. If you just collect multiple decks for fun, they're probably not going to implode just because you have a bunch of them shoved into a drawer with some cool rocks you picked up on the beach and that statue of Kali you don't like putting out because its eyes follow you around the room.

There are a few ways you can consecrate a new deck of cards before you use them for the first time. If you have an altar, you can leave them there for a few days to gather up positive energy from your other spiritual tools. You can put them out under the full moon (if it isn't likely to rain on them and if you live someplace where you can be sure your neighbors won't pick them up and walk off with them) or place them in the moonlight on a table or windowsill inside.

Instead of or in addition to these things, you can also do a simple consecration spell.

You will need: a small bowl of salt, a small bowl of water, a candle, incense or a sage smudge stick or a feather, and the deck you will be using

Optional: a piece of silk cloth, the box or pouch you will be storing the deck in (if any), and a small amethyst or clear quartz crystal

If you are unfamiliar with magical work, the salt represents the element/spirit of Earth, the water represents Water, the candle symbolizes Fire, and Air can be represented by either the smoke rising from the incense or the smudge stick or by the feather. I like to use a smudge stick for its cleansing aspects, but you can use whichever one feels right to you.

Place the silk cloth (or some other cloth if you want, since the salt will make a tiny mess) on a table and put the deck, plus the pouch or box if using one, on top. Take a few deep breaths and center yourself so that you are completely focused on your task. This can be done in a formally cast magical circle, but it doesn't have to be. Some people like to consecrate tools on the night of the full moon, but again, that isn't strictly necessary.

Hold the cards up toward the sky and say:

I consecrate these cards for positive use,
that they may serve me well today
and through all the days to come.

Place the cards on the cloth and sprinkle them with a tiny bit of salt, saying:

I consecrate these cards with the power
of Earth, strong and grounded.

Then sprinkle with a bit of water, saying:

I consecrate these cards with the power
of Water, flexible and flowing.

Light the candle and hold the cards carefully above the flame, saying:

I consecrate these cards with the power
of Fire, warm and passionate.

Wave the incense, sage stick, or feather over the cards, and say:

I consecrate these cards with the power
of Air, clarifying and refreshing.
May these cards be blessed and consecrated
*by the powers of god and goddess**
so that they may guide me truly
and help me to see clearly.
So mote it be.

If you are using a crystal, it can be placed inside the bag or box where you will be storing your tarot deck. It will help keep the energy clear and boost the power of the deck.

* You can substitute the name of any particular deity you follow or say "the universal spirit" or whatever term you are comfortable using.

A Cleansing Spell for Used Cards

You may want to use this spell if you buy or are given cards that have been previously used, just to make sure there isn't anything unpleasant clinging to them from their previous owner. It helps to make the cards know they now belong to you. You may also want to use it on your own deck if you have had a particularly discouraging or negative reading and would like to make sure that none of that energy lingers to contaminate the next reading you do.

For a cleansing, it is particularly nice if you can place the cards out in the light of the full moon overnight (either outside or on a windowsill or table where the moonlight will fall), or if it is summer, in the strong light of the sun for a day or at least a few hours. But really, your focus and intention (to cleanse the cards of any negativity) are all that are really necessary.

You will need: a black candle, a small bowl of water, a small bowl of salt, a sage smudge stick or any kind of cleansing incense (rosemary is especially good for this since it is good for both protection and enlightenment as well as cleaning)

Optional: a quartz crystal

Place the cards, either in their box or taken out and spread in an arc, on a table or cloth. Focus on your desire to cleanse them of anything icky (yes, that is the technical tarot term).

Light the candle and say:

I summon the powers of light to cleanse
this deck of any negativity.

Sprinkle the salt over the cards and say:

With Earth, I ground and clear these cards.

Sprinkle the water over the cards and say:

With the cleansing power of the rains,
the rivers, and the ocean surf, I wash away
all negativity and unwanted energies from these cards.

Light the sage stick or incense and hold the cards in the smoke. (If using a crystal, you can hold it on top of the cards at this point or in your other hand or simply place it next to your sage/incense holder.) Visualize any negative energy still clinging to the cards as a dark smudge, and see it sloughing off into the smoke and being carried away, up through the ceiling and into the sky. Say with feeling:

These cards are cleansed and glowing clear
Free of negativity
Darkness is gone, the light is here
Blessed may this tarot be!

If you want to, you can leave the deck sitting on your altar or some other safe place until the candle burns down, or you can simply snuff out the candle and put them away until the next time you need them. This can be done any time you feel as though the cards are in need of a cleansing.

A Spell for a Good Reading

Some witches send up a little prayer to the gods for clarity any time they do a reading. Others might do a spell before a reading if the outcome is pivotal and important questions are being asked. If you feel the need for such a thing, here is a simple spell that can be done before you use the tarot, either for yourself or for someone else.

You can light a candle or just hold the cards in your hands and say the following:

God and goddess
Beings of light
Send your clarity
To my sight
Help me see
Through fog and fear
And bring to me
The answers clear.

Chapter Three

The Major Arcana

The Fool

Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith.

A dark-haired witch wearing the classic black hat and gown sits astride a broom, about to sail off a cliff into the unknown. Her attitude is joyous. Her arms are spread wide, her eyes are closed, and her mouth is open in a yell (probably *Geronimo!*). Perched behind her is a black-and-white cat, one paw holding onto the back of her gown with its claws, the other over its eyes. The cat knows that the journey into the unfamiliar is fraught with peril, but he'd follow his witch companion anywhere.

0 • *The Fool*

★★★

"EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN."

So why is she flying off into who-knows-where? Because sometimes you reach a point where there is no choice but to close your eyes and jump. Life doesn't come with any guarantees, and from time to time you have to make the big leap in order to reap the big rewards. They don't call it a "leap of faith" for nothing, after all. Sometimes you just gotta believe.

Things to consider: Getting the Fool card doesn't mean you are a fool—far from it. What it probably means is that you have been hesitating at the precipice of a big decision, afraid to make the kind of choice that could change your whole life forever, or even of making a smaller choice that could shake things up.

The Fool reminds us that after a while you have to stop considering all the possible options, listen to your gut, and just DO IT. If you don't have faith in the universe, then have faith in yourself. Even if the adventure doesn't work out the way you want it to, you will almost certainly learn something and grow from the experience.

1 • *The Magician*

★★★

"THE MAGIC IS INSIDE YOU."

The Magician

You have all the tools you need to accomplish your goals.

On an altar are four silver tools: athame, wand, chalice, and pentacle coin. They glow with a golden light. A black cat is perched on one corner, sitting upright and Bastlike, knowing whatever it is that cats know. Behind the altar table stands an androgynous figure with dark shoulder-length hair held back by a silver circlet with a crescent moon in the middle. The figure wears rich and ornate flowing robes. A matching golden glow surrounds the figure and is strongest at their head, heart, and hands. Their arms are raised into the air, and swirls of power flow into the hands.

Who is this mysterious figure, and what does he or she represent? Magic, of course. Not the kind of magic that a stage magician does, all sleight of hand and tricks. No, the Magician holds true magic within: the ability to do what is necessary, to be wise, to be kind, and to find success at the end of every endeavor. The Magician represents our own capacity to balance all the tools of the four suits—Cups, Wands, Swords, and Pentacles—and use them to create positive change in the world. Who wouldn't want that kind of magic?

Things to consider: The Magician card is powerful and positive. If your question going into the reading was anything like "Can I do this?" or "Will I succeed?" then the Magician appearing will almost certainly mean that the answer is a resounding "You bet!"

But keep in mind that this card is about personal power and individual ability. Whatever you are dealing with, you may have to rely on yourself to triumph in the end. But don't worry—you already have all the tools you need to succeed.

However, if the Magician is in a position in the reading that indicates it represents someone other than you, it may be suggesting a strong ally whom you can depend on to work a little magic on your behalf.

Notes

2 • The High Priestess

★★★

"HIGHER WISDOM IS
AVAILABLE TO US ALL."

The High Priestess

Seek knowledge from within and without.

A dark-haired witch sits on a chair, wearing her witch's hat. To either side are tall pillar candles on stands, one white and one black. In front of her there is a large, glowing crystal ball into which she is looking. To the left of the crystal ball is a tarot card spread, and to the right is an enigmatic black cat with one foot resting on a drawstring bag from which runestones are spilling. Behind the table there are stacks of books. Mystery surrounds her, and yet you get the sense that this High Priestess knows everything about you—your worries and your innermost secret desires, your past and your future—before you even ask one question. She has the answers you seek, but can you convince her to share them?

The High Priestess represents both ancient wisdom and current knowledge. She is every wise woman who ever lived and every matriarch who ruled over her family's kitchen table. You can probably learn a lot from her, but you have to be looking for the answers in order to get them, and you have to be willing to deal with the truth when you get it. Life is rarely black and white, and neither is whatever you will learn.

Things to consider: The High Priestess represents deep wisdom. Sometimes that wisdom comes from outside of us

and sometimes it comes from within, but it rarely just lands in our laps accidentally. This card encourages you to embrace your own power, inner wisdom, and knowledge, and to pursue such things outside yourself as well. What are you seeking? What questions do you need answered? And what can you do to find them?

The High Priestess card in a reading may represent you or it may be an indication that there is someone you can turn to for help—a mentor, an elder, or someone you respect in your spiritual community. But don't expect this person to just hand you the answers. You are still going to have to do the hard work for yourself. Be aware of looking at things as being black or white, right or wrong; life is rarely that simple. And sometimes you have to accept that you can't know everything right now.

Notes

3 • *The Empress*

★★★

"THE DIVINE FEMININE IS
IN ALL OF US."

The Empress

Abundance, nurturing, and female power.

A vibrant witch dressed in a flowing, rich-colored gown stands tall and proud. She is sexy and yet also somehow maternal, with her dress draping off of her shoulders and spreading out from where it is gathered under abundant breasts. One hand rests on her belly, suggesting that she might possibly be pregnant. The other hand holds a scepter topped with a glowing ruby crystal, representing the blood of life. Behind her, apple trees bear both fruit and blossoms. She is Mother Nature and motherhood itself, nurturing and wise.

The Empress is the embodiment of all that is female and powerful, gifting us with abundance, strength, and growth. She is the cycle of life from birth to death, although for now we look on her in all her vivid and fertile glory, seeing the beauty that resides in every woman, no matter her age or circumstances. She reminds us that all women are divine. The Empress is the personification of growth and possibility. With her on your side, you can achieve anything.

Things to consider: The Empress is a reminder to embrace growth, abundance, and your own feminine power. (Even men have feminine power, although it may be more subtle.) The Empress says yes to life; do you? What are you growing in

the garden that is your life? Are you nurturing yourself and your own endeavors? The Empress may represent you or some strong woman in your life—a mother or role model or someone with that strong, nurturing energy—or she could even indicate pregnancy. Celebrate the divine feminine in your life, no matter what form it takes.

Notes

4 • *The Emperor*

★★★

"LEAD, AND OTHERS
WILL FOLLOW."

The Emperor

Strength lies not in might but in experience and the wisdom that comes from it.

An older male sage with brown hair shot with silver sits on a simple wooden throne at dusk. He wears a crown with prongs of antlers and holds a scepter with a glowing sapphire that matches his flowing red robes. His eyes are also blue, and his face is wise and a little bit stern but not forbidding. His other hand strokes the black kitten in his lap, and an older German shepherd sleeps at his feet. A scroll lies on the ground in front of him, partially unrolled to show a map of the constellations. The mood is one of solid strength and power; you know that this is a man you can trust and depend on. You also know that you should probably listen when he speaks. He didn't get where he is by accident. This guy knows things, and he gets things done. You could do worse than to follow his lead.

The Emperor is a true king. He is wise and experienced, and he always tries to do what is right for his people. He keeps order because life flows more easily when things are done correctly and everyone follows the rules. He does nothing without thinking it through first, but he is not afraid to take action if it is necessary. He is the embodiment of the sacred male, a father, and a figure of authority. The Emperor nurtures those around

him, just as the Empress does, but his approach is very different and his touch is a little heavier. He is definitely someone you want on your side, but be wary, since he can be harsh when he is sure he knows what is right for others and they refuse to do things his way.

Things to consider: The Emperor card often represents a strong male figure: a father, husband, boss, or mentor. Usually his presence is benevolent, even helpful, but occasionally he can be heavy-handed or oppressive. If this card is clearly meant to stand for you in this reading, it may be a suggestion to embrace your own strength or to bring more order to your world. It can also be a gentle hint that you are, shall we say, a tad too determined to have things your way.

If it indicates a strong man in your life, is he someone you can depend on? If so, that's fabulous, and you probably can relax a little about whatever is worrying you, knowing you have him on your side. On the other hand, the Emperor could indicate someone who thinks he is the boss of you when, in reality, he isn't. If someone is trying to force you into a mold you don't fit, it may be time to open your eyes to the situation and find a way to regain your own personal power.

Notes

5 • *The Hierophant*

★★★

"THE SACRED
IS EVERYWHERE."

The Hierophant

You create your spiritual path every time you take a step. Listen to those who came before you, but make it your own.

A witch sits in a cross-legged yoga pose on a cushion. Her witchy dress is pulled up to show striped leggings. Her eyes are closed and her hands are raised up to shoulder height with thumb and first fingers touching and palms facing upward. In front of her are two young witches sitting in the same pose. The mood is quiet and thoughtful as she teaches the next generation how to breathe. You'd think they'd know how to do so already, but really, which of us is fully present in our own lives?

This card is based on the word *hierophany*, which means "the manifestation of the sacred." The Hierophant is one who teaches, who leads the way, who shows us how to manifest the spiritual in our own lives. Sometimes the Hierophant is our own inner wisdom, guiding us to the next step along the path. This teacher may represent actual formal learning (classes or even a university degree) or perhaps more mind/body connections like the yoga being practiced in the picture on the card. It is all about creating a bridge between the mundane everyday life we all lead and the beliefs that shape our personal truths.

Things to consider: The Hierophant card may represent an actual teacher—someone who will help us to become our best selves—or it may be a reminder to stop and breathe. We all intend to take the time to manifest our spiritual selves, but the hectic pace of life often distracts us from this goal. If the Hierophant appears in your reading, ask yourself if it is a particular person who might have wisdom to share with you, or perhaps it is a suggestion to listen to your own inner voice. Are you walking your talk?

Notes

6 • *The Lovers*

★★★

"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE."

The Lovers

Love is all around us.

Two witches stand in front of a bonfire, holding hands. The smoke from the bonfire rises above them to form the shape of a female winged spirit, her arms spread wide. In front of the witches sit two cats, their tails entwined to form a heart in the middle. The mood is loving and warm. There is love here, both on the physical plane and the spiritual plane, and the sense that, no matter what, neither of these people will ever be alone.

The Lovers isn't as simple a card as it may seem. Yes, sometimes it really means romantic love, but it can also be about the power that love brings to heal and protect. These witches have chosen to stand together. Maybe they are lovers in truth, maybe friends or siblings. More important, they are there together, making an otherwise mundane moment something magical. Because what is more powerfully magical than love?

Things to consider: If you asked about love in your reading, then the Lovers may be the answer you were looking for. But it can also be about trust and love in general. Sometimes the Lovers card symbolizes all the pieces coming together in perfect harmony, so if you are trying to make a choice, you may want to use this card as a suggestion to look into your heart to discover which option gives you that magical feeling of completeness and rightness.

7 • The Chariot

★★★

"ONWARD AND UPWARD,
FORWARD EVER SIDEWAYS."

The Chariot

It doesn't matter which direction you pick,
as long as you pick one and get moving.

A witch wearing a black hat and motorcycle jacket is riding a red motorcycle. In the sidecar attached to the motorcycle is perched a black cat. They are stopped at a crossroads. To one side there is a black signpost with white writing that reads *This Way*, with an arrow pointing to the left. To the other side there is a white signpost with black lettering that reads *That Way*, with an arrow pointing to the right. The witch and the cat both look thoughtful and maybe a bit puzzled. The mood is tentatively optimistic; either way could have something wonderful at the end.

The Chariot is about forward movement. But more than that, it is about staying in control as you move forward, steering your own course toward your destiny. Life may be pulling you in different directions, but you get to choose. Sometimes you even get to say "both" or "everything," but only if making that choice doesn't cause you to veer off your path and into a ditch.

Things to consider: It can be difficult to choose a path, especially if they both look inviting. Ask yourself what it is you truly desire, and how hard you are willing to work to get it.

Whatever happens, don't allow anyone to make the choice for you. This is your time to be in charge and make the decisions that will shape your future. Choose wisely, then move forward with confidence, knowing that you are capable of making the journey.

Notes

8 • *Strength*

★★★

"I AM POWER;
HEAR ME ROAR."

Strength

You are stronger than you think.

A witch in a black hat points the wand in her right hand off to the side, pushing away a powerful storm. Light is streaming out of the wand, and a funnel cloud can be seen moving away, taking darkness with it. The rest of the card is light, and the witch is so confident in her magic that she isn't even looking in that direction. Instead, her attention is directed at the giant lion to her left, who is licking her hand. At its feet sits a black cat, looking proud, as if it is saying, "It followed me home; can I keep it?"

There is a lot of power in the Strength card, but it isn't because the witch has more magic than anyone else or can turn you into a toad without a second thought (although both of those may be true). Her power comes from confidence in her own abilities and knowing that the universe makes all things come right in the end. Even her cat has that kind of confidence and views the huge lion as just a slightly larger member of the family. The Strength card reminds us that we have what it takes to triumph, no matter what comes our way.

Things to consider: If this card appears in a reading, it is almost certainly there to remind you of your own inner

strength. It is saying, "Yes, yes, you can." You may feel overwhelmed or uncertain, but whatever you are facing, you have the strength to endure and triumph in the end.

Notes

9 • The Hermit

★★★

"THERE IS WISDOM IN
LISTENING TO THE SILENCE."

The Hermit

Alone is not the same thing as lonely.

A witch sits in a clearing in the midst of a dark woods. The only light comes from the bonfire in front of her. She is sitting cross-legged, her hat and broom to one side and her black cat on the other. Her eyes are closed, but she is clearly meditating or listening, not sleeping. An owl is perched on a branch nearby. The mood is serene and quiet. You can tell that she is alone by choice; perhaps permanently, perhaps for only a night or two.

There are times when you can only hear yourself think by removing yourself from the world for a bit. Maybe you need to take some time by yourself. Maybe you need a break from relationships or hectic jobs or anything else that involves people and noise. Maybe you just need to take a moment here and there to sit and be still. The Hermit reminds us that being alone is not the same thing as being lonely, and sometimes the best way to heal or learn or grow is to do it by ourselves in silence.

Things to consider: The Hermit is a good indication that it is time for you to be alone for a while. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. If life is so hectic that you can't seem to hear your own thoughts, perhaps you need a little peace and quiet. You don't necessarily have to go off into the woods; maybe just turn

off the phone and the computer for a few hours. The Hermit reminds us to stop and be quiet so we can listen to our own inner voice, which often gets lost in the noise of the rest of the world. If your question involved romance, then the answer may be that now isn't the time for that. Sometimes what we really need is solitude and time to be fully present with ourselves.

Notes

10 • *Wheel of Fortune*

★★★

"ALL POSSIBILITIES LIE
BEFORE YOU."

Wheel of Fortune

With change comes opportunity.
What will you choose?

A witch in a pointy hat stands next to a prize wheel, one hand poised to spin it. At various places on the wheel there are pictures: a house, a pot of pentacle-marked coins, a caduceus, a shooting star, a sun, a diamond ring, an open book, and a heart. It is clear that she has a multitude of wide-open possibilities, all of them good. All she has to do is decide which one she wants and go for it.

Who among us doesn't wish for prosperity, health, love, and opportunity? Of course, if we are given too many options, it becomes hard to choose. Life is almost easier when it is difficult and the possibilities are limited. The Wheel of Fortune shows us that change is coming. Perhaps we'll get to choose; perhaps fate will choose for us. Either way, that wheel is spinning, and nobody knows what will happen next.

Things to consider: The Wheel of Fortune says, "Heads up! Pay attention!" Are there opportunities in front of you that you aren't paying attention to? If so, you'd better grab one before it spins out of reach. Wrestling with a difficult choice? This card won't help you to make the decision, but it does remind you that fortune favors the bold. If you don't choose,

the universe will probably choose for you. Sometimes the Wheel of Fortune is simply a warning that something unexpected is coming. That doesn't mean something bad, necessarily, but it is always good to be prepared, isn't it?

Notes

11 • Justice

★★★

"WHAT GOES AROUND,
COMES AROUND."

Justice

Sooner or later, the universe balances itself out—but maybe not the way you expected.

A silver-haired witch wearing a black gown sits upright on a chair. From one hand dangles a set of scales. On one side of the scales there is a black kitten and on the other there is a white kitten. They are hissing at each other, each with one paw raised, claws out. In the witch's other hand she holds a large, open book of laws. There is a blindfold over her eyes, but it is pulled up a little on the side toward the scale, and she is clearly peeking out. The feeling of the card is serious but with a hint of amusement. That Karma, she sure can be a bitch.

People say that Justice is blind; that just means they've never met her. She sees everything, even when it seems as though she isn't looking. There is no hiding the truth; she sees your actions and inside your soul. If things aren't going well, Justice suggests looking at where your responsibility in the situation lies. But if you are worried that someone else won't get what they deserve, don't. Justice watches everyone, and sooner or later she makes sure the scales balance out.

Things to consider: The idea of karma is simple: you reap what you sow. Life, of course, rarely works out exactly that way, but sooner or later things tend to come back around.

The Justice card stands for legal justice on occasion, but just as often it signifies fairness, truth, and balance. If you are asking for justice, be sure that is what you want; the universe doesn't play favorites or take sides. If the Justice card appears in your reading, it may be a reminder to be careful what you are putting out into the world, or it may be an assurance that you are going to triumph over an unfair situation at last.

Notes

12 • The Hanged Man

★★★

"JUST HANGING AROUND."

The Hanged Man

Just because you haven't moved in ages doesn't mean you're stuck. Oh, wait—yes, it does.

A witch hangs upside down from a broom that stretches across the top of the card. There are chains around the witch's feet and hands with big locks on them, Houdini-like. Tucked in one hand, barely visible but glowing to catch attention, is the key to the locks. The mood is one of being stuck in limbo but with the possibility of a solution right before your eyes.

Ever feel like you are completely stuck, unable to move in any direction? Then you will sympathize with this poor witch, who is clearly in a similar situation. He's in limbo, caught between time and space, not going anywhere anytime soon. And there's nothing he can do about it. Or is there? If you look closely, you will see that he has the key that will unlock his bonds; he only has to figure out how to get himself out of that uncomfortable position so he can use it. Maybe it is time to look at things from a different point of view than usual. Luckily, that should be easy to do since he is already hanging upside down.

Things to consider: No one is ever truly stuck, but there are definitely times when it feels like it. The Hanged Man

shows up in a reading to remind us that if we have hit the wall, sometimes the only way out is to go over or around instead of through. That may require that you stop banging your head against it long enough to figure out a completely different approach. But clearly, whatever you've been doing hasn't been working.

Where in your life are you stuck? Try looking at the situation from a new angle or with a better attitude. You can do something to get yourself unstuck, or you can simply accept that you are stuck right now and see if there are any benefits to be had from simply hanging around for a while.

Notes

13 • Death

★★★

"ALL THINGS MUST
END SOMETIME."

Death

When one door closes, another opens.

A black-cloaked and hooded figure stands in the middle of a dark landscape, a blank white porcelain mask over its face. It holds a silver sword poised over a fraying brown rope. To one side of the figure there is a closed door, and to the other there is a door that is open just enough to show a golden light shining through. At the edge of the card, a black cat has one paw on a gray tail of something that is running away. The feeling of the card is grim but with a glimmer of hope.

Don't panic! The Death card doesn't always mean actual death. In fact, it is much more likely to indicate the death of "something" such as the end of an era and the beginning of another. We often have to let go of one thing to make room for something better, but that doesn't mean that the process is always pleasant (or that you know this is what is happening while you are caught up in the pain of the transition). A bad relationship "dies" so that you can find a better one. You lose a job that is sucking the soul out of you. These deaths hurt, don't they? But when you look back on them later, you will do so with gratitude because they freed you to move on. It is okay to mourn, but don't forget that death can also mean rebirth into something wonderful.

Things to consider: The Death card doesn't seem like it is the bringer of good news, does it? But it also rarely comes as a surprise. You probably already knew that something was ending. Hopefully you have caught a glimpse of whatever new thing will take its place and can find some solace in it. It's okay to mourn your loss. Just don't make the mistake of hanging on to something that is already gone. It's dead; let it go. And when you are done mourning, perhaps you will be able to find the open door that has taken the place of the one that just closed.

Notes

14 • *Temperance*

★★★

"STRIVE FOR BALANCE
IN ALL THINGS."

Temperance

Balance: it's impossible to achieve,
but keep striving anyway.

A witch wearing a black hat, a black tunic, and striped tights stands straight and rooted in Tree Pose. She has one eye open and one eye closed. There is some space around her, but to one side there is a tray with cupcakes on it, a martini glass, and an open laptop. To the other side there is a plate with a bunch of carrots complete with leafy green ends, a clear glass full of water with a slice of lemon on it, and a book. A small black kitten is licking frosting off of one paw over by the cupcakes. The feeling of the card is lighthearted yet perfectly balanced.

How do you achieve balance in life? Our Temperance witch would probably say, "Moderation in all things, including moderation," and then smile that angelic smile because she has managed to achieve what for most of us is simply impossible. That doesn't mean we can't try, though. Striving for perfect balance is a never-ending task that requires both discipline and calm, along with the ability to go with the flow while staying rooted and strong. We never said it was easy, did we?

Things to consider: Have you ever tried standing in Tree Pose? For most of us, the best we can hope for is to maintain

it for a moment or two before we start to wobble. The keys to this yoga pose, much like the keys to life, are being rooted in the earth and to your own core, staying calm and composed, and not struggling too hard.

If the Temperance card appears in your reading, it may be a reminder to reach for your inner strength and take a deep breath. Is your life out of control? Perhaps it is time to work on moderation and calm, to make sure you are paying attention to all aspects of your life: work and play, time with others and time for yourself, striving and resting, indulgence and self-discipline. Try to go with the flow...and every once in a while, treat yourself to a cupcake.

Notes

15 • The Devil

★★★

"THE DEVIL YOU KNOW ISN'T NECESSARILY BETTER THAN THE ONE YOU DON'T."

The Devil

The Devil made you do it?
I don't think so.

A handsome devil of a mage with dark hair, a pointed black beard, and a swirling black cape is offering money to a young male witch and an ice cream cone to a young female witch. While he is smiling and pleasant, a pointed tail curls out from underneath his cape and his eyes have a reddish gleam. Each witch has a cat who is trying to pull them away and is being ignored. A volcano smokes in the far background. The mood is ominous but not hopeless.

Contrary to what you might think, the Devil doesn't represent some evil being who comes in from the outside world to lure and ensnare us. That would be easier to fight than the reality, which is that each of us has devils that we have created for ourselves: addiction, bad habits, obsessions, and unhealthy decisions that we cling to long after it is clear that they are leading us in the wrong direction or holding our lives hostage. Temptation can be so hard to resist. That makes this seem like a scary, hopeless card, but it isn't. We often hold on to the devil we know because we are more comfortable with the negativity and dysfunction we are used to than we are the idea of starting over and creating something better. But you can do it. You chose this devil, and you can choose to say "no more."

Things to consider: What does the Devil card stand for in your life? What holds you back? Are you looking clearly at all the aspects of your life—relationships, jobs, patterns of thought or behavior—or are you clinging to things you know harm you because it seems too difficult to walk away? If the Devil card represents a person who is bad for you—and sometimes it does—perhaps it is time to stop kidding yourself about their intentions and walk away. Rapidly. No matter what this card stands for, it also tells you that you have the power to change things for the better.

Notes

16 • *The Tower*

★★★

"CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION—
THINGS GO BOOM."

The Tower

Sometimes things have to crash and burn to make room for something new and better.

A fairy-tale tower lies in smoking ruins. To one side is a witch with a mischievous look on her face, a wand behind her back with tiny sparks shooting out of it. A black-and-white cat peers cautiously out from underneath some nearby bushes. The witch is wearing a black pointed hat and a black cape, and both the cape and her long dark hair are blowing in the wind created by the explosion. The feeling of the card is wild and chaotic but not depressing. In fact, you suspect that perhaps this witch has purposely blown things up. You just can't for the life of you figure out why.

Life rarely runs smoothly, but there are times when it seems as though our entire existence is crashing down around our ears. Jobs are lost, relationships implode, we lose friendships that we treasured. Some of this is just life; after all, as everyone knows, stuff happens. But much of the time, that chaos and destruction has to occur to make room for something new and better. Take heart. Try to see the positive in even the worst situation. You can survive the blast.

Things to consider: Depending on where this card falls in the reading, the explosion may already have happened, you

may be in the midst of the chaos, or disaster may still be on its way. If the tower has already gone boom, what can you learn from the experience? What new and positive things can rise out of the ashes of what you have lost? If you are in the midst of the mess, how can you cope better or who can you ask for help? If the crisis is on the horizon, how can you prepare better now that you know it is coming? Look deep, and you may find that you already knew there was something you had to let go of, no matter how difficult the process might be. What can you build out of whatever remains?

Notes

17 • *The Star*

★★★

"WE ARE THE LIGHT
OF THE STARS."

The Star

The Cosmos is also within us. We are made of star-stuff. (Carl Sagan)

A witch with flowing silver hair and a long silver gown stands under a dark sky filled with stars. She wears a circlet made of glowing stars, which also cover her dress. One hand is raised toward the sky, palm open, and light flows down from the sky into her palm like the northern lights. The other hand points to the ground, palm down, and that same multicolored light flows out into a pool of water by her feet. The water is blue but turns colors where the light joins it. Here is a guiding light in the dark, hope and tranquility, peace amid chaos. She will help lead you to a place of balance that will cleanse your spirit, and if you are fortunate, perhaps she will grant you a wish.

The stars have long been a sight that lifts our hearts; is there anything more beautiful than that bright spot of light in a dark sky? The Star is one of those rare cards that has no negative interpretations. If she shows up in your reading, accept her gifts with gratitude and appreciation.

Things to consider: The Star brings with it balance and hope, and a reminder that we all have a spark of the divine within us. As Carl Sagan said, we are all made of star-stuff.

So while the Star promises us that we will find what we seek, it also reminds us to look within as well as without for the answers, and to let our light shine out into the world to illuminate the paths of others.

Notes

18 • *The Moon*

★★★

"MYSTERY, MAGIC, AND
A HINT OF MAYHEM."

The Moon

Go ahead, howl at the moon.
You know you want to.

A large full moon fills the night sky, and the silhouette of a witch wearing a black hat and riding on a broom can be seen crossing in front of it. On the ground below, a black cat gazes into a pool of water at its reflection. A black panther gazes back, its mouth open so you can see its fangs. A path leads off into the distance away from the pool. The mood is mysterious, half wild and half tame, much like our own spirits and the moon itself.

The moon has long been the symbol of the goddess: feminine power personified. It also represents change, both predictable and not, as its very shape seems to mutate in the sky above, moving from a tiny sliver into a full, round orb and back again until it disappears from sight. The Moon card may carry with it a suggestion that there are unseen forces at work, mysterious and impossible to foresee. It can also indicate someone who is torn between their two natures—tame or wild, practical or creative. Can you embrace them both or must you choose? Only the moon knows, and she's not telling.

Things to consider: The Moon card often indicates a time or feeling of uncertainty. Have you been restless, torn between

two paths? Perhaps now is the time to choose which aspect of yourself will show its face to the world. If you have been having nightmares, perhaps your subconscious is trying to send you a message. Make sure you are listening.

The Moon card may herald a time of flux and change; neither good nor bad, it simply warns you to look carefully at the reflection in the water. What hidden secrets will it reveal if you are daring enough to gaze directly at the moon's face?

Notes

19 • *The Sun*

★★★

"LET THE SUN SHINE IN."

The Sun

It doesn't get better than this.

A bright yellow sun fills the sky. Underneath, wearing bright, gauzy clothing, three witches—a maiden (a budding young woman), a mother (hugely pregnant), and a crone (older but still spry)—dance in a circle. They are in the middle of a field of sunflowers, and three black kittens can be seen peering out from amongst the flowers; one even has a flower dangling from its mouth. The mood is celebratory and glorious, and why shouldn't it be? This is the best day of their lives!

What could be more wonderful than to dance in the warmth and light of the sun on a perfect day and in the perfect company? Not much, that's what. Sometimes life gifts you with a moment, an hour, a day of joy and spontaneous celebration. Maybe you have a sudden breakthrough coming out of the clouds of uncertainty or depression. Maybe you are simply hit by one of those "ahhhhh" moments when everything seems to fall into place. Enjoy it because such times are rare and fleeting. Later you can deal with everyday issues, but for today, just dance!

Things to consider: The Sun card is simple and completely positive. If it shows up in your reading, it is always a good sign. Did you ask a question? The Sun probably means the answer is yes, or maybe it is just a reminder to take time

out to enjoy the good moments when they show up. When is the last time you celebrated something or danced for joy just because you could? Let the sun shine into your life, and joy is sure to follow.

Notes

20 • *Judgement*

★★★

"HERE WE GO AGAIN."

Judgement

Where has your path led you, and where will it lead you now?

A witch in a black hat dances merrily down a path while playing a recorder and wearing a short black tunic that shows off her striped stockings. A black kitten bounces in her wake, chasing a butterfly that flits amongst the musical notes. A shining light beckons from the direction they are heading. The mood is of anticipation.

The Judgement card is often perceived as something ominous due to the traditional picture that features naked dead people being summoned by the angel Gabriel's trumpet. What isn't clear is that this call is less about being judged by someone else and more about taking a look at your own life and finding it unsatisfactory. Our witch on the card is following some music that only she can hear, playing along as she moves happily down the path toward rebirth, renewal, and letting go. She is light of heart and feet because she has put down old grudges and hurts that were dragging her down. There is joy in finally heeding the call to the life you are meant to be living.

Things to consider: Are you following your own music or dancing to someone else's tune? The Judgement card reminds

us to listen to our own inner wisdom. It can also be a suggestion that we are judging ourselves too harshly or taking others' judgment of us to heart. If this card shows up in your reading, it may be an indication that it is time to let go of the old and embrace the new. Rebirth and renewal await if you are willing to go down the path that will take you to them.

Notes

21 • *The World*

★★★

"SUCCESS AND
CELEBRATION; HUZZAH!"

The World

The world is your oyster. Unless you don't like oysters, in which case it is your hot fudge sundae.

A witch throws her black hat into the air, and it sails away on the wind. The sun is shining, and she is on a tropical beach with her bare feet in the waves as they meet the shore. A little farther from the water there is a blanket spread with a feast, including a large glass with fruit on a stick and a tiny umbrella. A black cat sits by the blanket, looking pleased. The mood is of joyousness and the attainment of all desires. This witch may have taken a long journey to get here, but at last she is right where she wants to be.

Break out the bubbly and strike up the band—there is a lot to celebrate. The World card signifies completion, the attainment of goals, and success in whatever endeavors you have been pursuing. If it is the final future card in a reading, no matter what comes before it, you will triumph in the end.

The World is another one of those rare cards that has no negative interpretations. Nothing but good times ahead, baby. You did it. Pat yourself on the back. Hell, have someone else pat you on the back too. You deserve it.

Things to consider: If you have been striving for ages, working hard to achieve your dreams, getting the World card is

very good news indeed. It means that, sooner or later, success will be yours. Depending on the card's placement in a reading, that goal may be some time off, but at least you can continue the journey knowing that eventually you are going to get there. If you asked a question and got the World card, you can be pretty sure the answer is a loud and enthusiastic yes. *Huzzah!*

Notes

Ace of Swords

★★★

"TA-DA!"

Ace of Swords

New beginnings, new ideas,
new clarity—it's all good.

The aces often represent an unusual opportunity: one of those moments that enter our lives as a gift, often unexpected, always fleeting. The Ace of Swords in particular suggests that it is time to look at life in a new way or act on a new idea that will change things dramatically. Don't let this moment pass you by without taking advantage of whatever it is the universe is offering. Open your mind and let the light shine in.

Things to consider: Sometimes an idea will come to you in a flash—a new plan of action when you thought you were stuck, a new way of looking at an old situation. The Ace of Swords is a reminder to be open to such things. Has someone suggested something to you recently that you originally dismissed? Try thinking about it again. Are you feeling a sudden shift in attitude? Go with it. That flash may be the light glinting off the edge of the sword of truth.

Two of Swords

★★★

"A. NO, B. NO, A.
DAMMIT."

Two of Swords

You think you don't know
the answer, but you do.

The witch in this picture has a decision to make, but it is possible she isn't going about making it in the most effective way. Even the cat knows she's being silly. Sometimes it is hard to be decisive when faced with a difficult choice, but the Two of Swords tells you that you already know which answer is right—you just have to take off your blindfold and really look at the situation.

Things to consider: What aren't you looking at clearly? If you are trying to make a tough choice, what does your gut say to do? Probably the options aren't as tough to choose between as you are making it seem. Try flipping a coin. If you are disappointed with the side that comes up, you clearly wanted to do the other. Don't be fooled into thinking that this decision is impossible to make. Really, you already know what to do.

Three of Swords

★★★

"OH, MY ACHY BREAKY HEART."

Three of Swords

Sometimes heartbreak is unavoidable.
The least you can do is learn from it.

The Three of Swords is one of those cards that can't possibly mean anything other than bad news. As the picture suggests, it is an indication of hurt and heartbreak, often brought about by poor communication or just plain malice. It may signify betrayal or simply a broken heart. Either way, all that can be done is to pick up the pieces and try to learn something from the situation so you never end up back here again.

Things to consider: If this card is in the past position, it suggests that previous heartbreak is influencing how you view the world. Is this a good thing, keeping you from getting hurt again, or is it holding you back from trusting others? If it is the present—ouch. So sorry. Maybe the situation can be repaired with better communication? Probably not, though. So what can you learn? If it shows up in a future position, maybe you can act now to prevent a crisis—or, you know, run away.

Four of Swords

★★★

"TO SLEEP, PERCHANCE
TO DREAM..."

Four of Swords

Are you resting or retreating?

We all need to pull back from the world from time to time and take a break, catch our breath, and regroup. The trick is to know the difference between the lack of movement that is positive and beneficial, and the lack of movement that means we are stuck in a state of suspended animation.

Things to consider: Depending on where this card falls in a reading, it may be a suggestion that you need to rest and refresh your spirit, giving yourself the time and space to renew body, mind, and spirit. Alternately, it may indicate that you are stuck in a rut, spinning your wheels when you should be taking action. Are you tired and overwhelmed? Are you running away from making the tough choices or taking decisive action that you know is needed? Is there someone in your life who is holding you back or whose lack of action has a negative effect on your current circumstances? This card indicates that they are stuck and probably not going to change. Do you need a rest or a wake-up call?

Five of Swords

★★★

"BE CAREFUL WHAT
YOU WISH FOR."

Five of Swords

Just because you get what you want doesn't mean you're going to be happy that you got it. Sometimes sharing is better than winning.

"Yay! I get all the swords!" One of these witches sure is looking happier than the other two. It looks like her spell won out over those of the others, and she has proven herself to be the superior magic wielder—but at what cost? Maybe she got so caught up in the moment that she didn't think about the consequences, but it is pretty clear there are going to be some. At best, there will be a lack of trust in the future; at worst, her friends will never work with her again. Was it worth it? Somewhere down the road, she may be wishing she'd played a little nicer.

Things to consider: Life is a lot easier when people work together instead of always trying to win or be the best. The Five of Swords reminds us of the cost of being obsessed with coming out on top, and it warns us that there may be those around us who aren't really looking out for our best interests. Are *you* playing nice?

Six of Swords

★★★

"ANYPLACE BUT HERE."

Six of Swords

Sometimes you just have to get gone.
Try not to take your troubles with you.

This witch isn't going to spend one more minute where she is. She's already on her way, with only a few necessities, because time is of the essence and sometimes it is better to get out with nothing than to hang on to things or people that are weighing you down. But she's not traveling alone. It isn't clear if she is helping her traveling companions or if they are helping her, but either way, they are in this together. An arcane gesture to summon the wind and they're off into an unknown future. All she knows is that anyplace will be better than whatever it is she's leaving behind.

Things to consider: Sometimes there are situations you simply can't fix: unhealthy relationships, jobs that beat you down, dangerous or unproductive circumstances. If you're dealing with one of these, you have to ask yourself if it is time to cut your losses and just get out. And there is no shame in asking for help to do so, if you need to, or maybe someone else needs your help to escape their own bad situation. It's okay to lend a hand, as long as you are sure you're not going to end up carrying burdens that don't belong to you.

Seven of Swords

★★★

"LA, LA, LA...
NOTHING TO SEE HERE."

Seven of Swords

I'm carrying this stuff with me—but am I running away or running to?

There's something wrong with this picture, isn't there? Our friend carrying the swords is clearly someplace she doesn't belong and doing something she isn't supposed to be doing. But sometimes appearances can be deceiving. Is she taking something away or is she bringing something in? Is there some kind of heroic mission involved or merely underhanded mischief? Whichever it is, it looks like shenanigans are afoot.

Things to consider: The Seven of Swords can be a warning to be alert. Whatever situation you're in the midst of may be more complicated that it appears to be, and it might be hard to know who to trust. If something seems off, you should probably listen to your instincts. On the other hand, don't jump to conclusions—there may be a perfectly reasonable explanation for that guy walking off with all your jewelry. Maybe he's just taking it out to be cleaned...

Eight of Swords

★★★

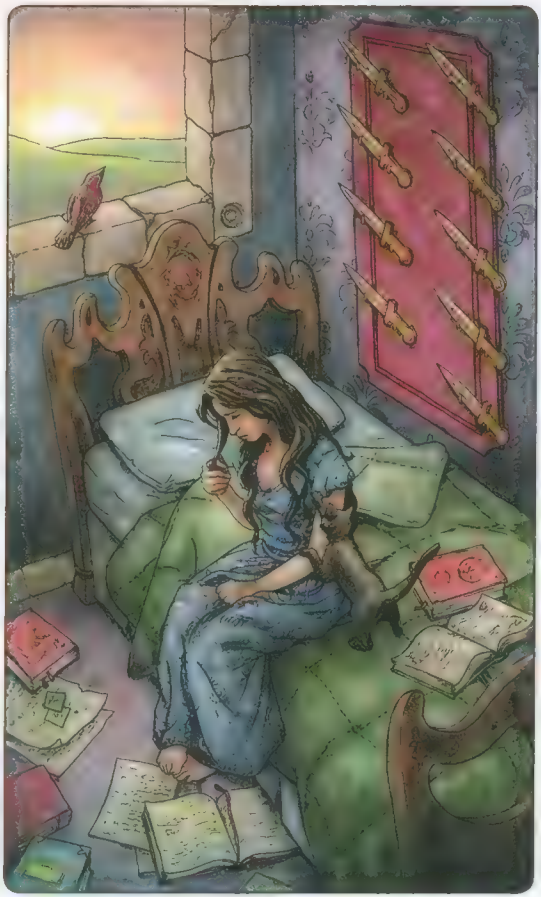
"IS IT DARK IN HERE
OR IS IT ME?"

Eight of Swords

I gotta get out of this place
if it's the last thing I ever do.

Oh, crap," the witch in this picture is thinking. "I'm trapped and I can't see the way out." But if you look closer, you will see that her hands aren't really tied. All she has to do is let go of the ribbon that binds them, pull off her blindfold, and look more closely at whatever it is she doesn't really want to see. Her faithful companion is already working hard at trying to help her free herself; she just has to stop panicking and start thinking clearly. She already has all the answers she needs. The little blue bird offers a glimmer of hope.

Things to consider: Sometimes we get so caught up in a situation that we tie ourselves into knots. It feels like we're trapped by circumstance or by the actions of others but, in truth, it is our own fear that keeps us bound and unable to move forward in a productive fashion. Ask yourself if this card represents you. If it does, you already know how to free yourself, so the real question is, why don't you? Try not to let emotion overwhelm your ability to think clearly. Take a deep breath, stop panicking for a moment, and the solution will probably present itself. Of course, that doesn't mean you're going to like it. If it was easy, you probably would have done it already.



Nine of Swords

★★★

"WOE IS ME."

Nine of Swords

It's always darkest before the dawn.

Who hasn't had a night like this one? This witch is overwhelmed with sadness, and although there is no way for us to tell exactly what she's been obsessing over, whatever it is has clearly been weighing heavily on her mind and heart. In her head everything seems hopeless, and yet if she would only stop crying for a moment and look up, she would see that it is the dawn of a brand-new day. Anything is possible. She is not as alone as she feels.

Things to consider: All of us have times when life seems overwhelming. Our hearts are broken or our spirit is crushed, and it seems like we will always feel this way. If the Nine of Swords is in the past position, you may finally be working your way out of the dark; whew. If it is in the present, then you want to ask yourself if things are truly as bad as they seem (and maybe they are) or if you are letting yourself get caught up in the spiral of self-pity and despair that never gets you anywhere. In either case, you should probably pick your head up and look around; there may be a light at the end of the tunnel that you're missing completely because you're so caught up in the drama of the situation. If the Nine of Swords falls in the future position, it is a warning: better pay attention or you will probably end up crying.

Ten of Swords

★★★

"WATCH YOUR BACK."

Ten of Swords

Ouch! That's going to leave a mark.

Well, that didn't go exactly as planned, did it? The Ten of Swords is one of those cards that clearly demonstrates the saying "some days you get the bear, some days the bear gets you." In the case of the poor witch in this picture, the bear (or some other foe) has won the day. The battle is over. But take a closer look because she's not beaten. Battered, you bet; maybe ready to give up on this particular situation and call it a total loss. But none of this means that she can't learn something from the experience, even if what she's learned is who *not* to turn her back on the next time. She's just going to wait until she is sure the coast is clear, then pull those stupid swords out and limp away with her faithful cat by her side, sadder but wiser.

Things to consider: If the Ten of Swords shows up in your reading in the past or present positions, you're probably feeling a bit rough right now. Did someone let you down or deceive you? If so, were you really surprised or did you know in your heart of hearts that they couldn't be trusted, but you didn't want to listen to that inner warning voice? What can you learn from your experience, whatever it was? If some plan went horribly wrong, it may not have been your fault; the only thing

you can do is pick yourself up, pull the stupid swords out of your back, and keep on going. If the Ten of Swords shows up in the future position, watch out! This is a serious warning, and maybe if you heed it you can save yourself a lot of grief somewhere down the line.

Notes

Page of Swords

★★★

"IMPULSIVE OR INTUITIVE?
YOU DECIDE."

Page of Swords

I don't need to know where
I'm going to get there.

Look at this young witch, ready to hit the road in search of a new idea or a daring adventure. Ah, youth. It doesn't really matter if he is prepared; he's going anyway, and that's okay. After all, everyone has to start somewhere. No doubt he'll learn a lot on the journey. The only question is, will he learn it the hard way or the easy way? No one really knows until they try.

Things to consider: The pages often represent a younger person, a child, or someone for whom you feel responsible. But, as we know, everyone is young at heart, so no matter what age you are, this card can also represent you if you are following an idea or beginning on the path to a new goal. The Page of Swords indicates a mixture of enthusiasm and uncertainty, coupled with determination to pursue the journey to its end, no matter where it leads. Just be sure that you aren't following an idea just because it appeals to you on an intellectual (rather than emotional) level, but isn't based in fact or practicality. There is such a thing as being too smart for your own good.

Knight of Swords

★★★

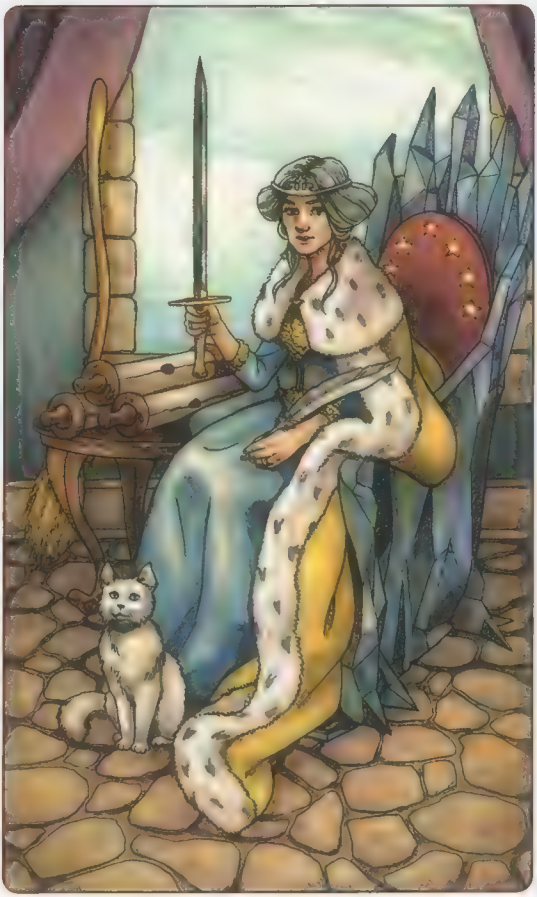
"CHARGE!"

Knight of Swords

Ready or not, here I come.

The Knight of Swords is coming—best get out of his way! Unless, of course, he is here to sweep you off your feet. The knights are all about movement, this one more so than the others. Once he gets an idea in his head, there will be no stopping him. Of course, if he is on your side, you may not want him to. The Knight of Swords is a capable ally, determined and focused. Maybe a little too focused, in fact, since he can be hard to stop once he gets going. If you are going along for the ride, expect to feel the wind in your hair and see the ground far underneath your feet.

Things to consider: When the Knight of Swords appears in a reading, he often represents an impetuous younger man. There are times, however, when he is the knight on a white horse, riding in to rescue the fair damsel. Either way, you are probably going to have to rescue him or let him rescue you. Or you could just watch him chase that idea, whatever it is. Unless, of course, you have an idea of your own you want to chase, in which case, *charge!*



Queen of Swords

★★★

"I AM A WISE WOMAN,
POWERFUL AND IN CONTROL."

Queen of Swords

Sometimes you need to cut through the nonsense and take charge of your own life.

The Queen of Swords is a wise and experienced woman. She has been around long enough to feel secure in her own position and to know how to see clearly, despite any emotion that might cloud the thoughts of others. While not cold, she is calm and cool. Whatever you do, don't try to lie to her. Her sword isn't just for decoration. She will be fierce in the defense of what she feels is right, and she will come to the aid of any who are under her protection. Make sure you stay on her good side, and she will be an ally when you need one.

Things to consider: If the Queen of Swords represents someone else in your reading, she may be an older woman or someone with power in your life. You will recognize her by her insistence on truth and fair play. You can depend on her for help as long as you are willing to work by her rules. If the queen represents you, your strength and intelligence are clear to others. Unfortunately, some might find those qualities intimidating, so be careful not to be too cool and distant when dealing with others. But don't be afraid to let your intellect shine out, either. Wisdom and clarity of thought are good things to have in a confusing world.

King of Swords

★★★

"LOOK TO ME FOR
ANSWERS FROM THE HEAD,
NOT THE HEART."

King of Swords

Sometimes wisdom requires a cool head and the voice of experience.

The King of Swords is one cool customer. He is all about logic and reason, intrigued by ideas but not interested in fantasy. If you need wisdom, you should seek him out. But if you're looking for a hug, you'd be better off going to the King of Cups or, you know, anywhere else. The King of Swords can help you when you need practical advice or a calm, clear head. Just don't expect sympathy. All he wants is the facts, ma'am.

Things to consider: If the King of Swords shows up in a reading, like all the kings, he may represent a strong male figure, but one who is not emotionally involved with you. A boss, perhaps, or a mentor who teaches but doesn't make a deeper connection. He is someone who supports you because you are in the right or because he feels it is his duty, but it's not out of love or sentiment. That doesn't mean you can't accept the help he offers, just don't mistake it for something it isn't. If this card is in a position where it represents you, it may suggest that you are reacting from logic or practicality, without taking emotional issues into consideration. Or, just possibly, it is a reminder to keep your cool.

Ace of Cups

★★★

"MY CUP RUNNETH OVER."

Ace of Cups

You are clearly blessed; joy and fulfillment are yours for the taking. But don't wait too long, for such moments can be fleeting.

Like the mythical cauldron of rebirth and renewal, the Ace of Cups offers love, peace, and healing. The witch on the card might be a village wise woman or she might be the goddess herself in disguise. There is no way of knowing. But if you are smart, you will accept the cup she offers you; it will almost certainly contain something powerful and amazing, and it will probably be just what you need in that moment. Drink deep while you can because such gifts are rare and fleeting, and there is no telling when such an opportunity will come along again.

Things to consider: The Ace of Cups is a fabulous card, representing a gift from the universe. There is no way to predict the form such a gift will take, but because it is a Cup card, it may well involve emotions and the spirit. Keep yourself open to grace and possibility, and when it appears, don't let it slip past. Consider yourself blessed.

Two of Cups

★★★

"IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO,
AMONG OTHER THINGS."

Two of Cups

Attraction, compatibility, and partnership; a cup shared can be the start of many good things.

The Two of Cups is all about connection. That might mean love, whether new and exciting or forged by the fire of years spent together. It might mean partnership of some other kind. But either way, the connection is deep and important, positive and healthy, and not to be taken lightly. Together, these two people make magic, creating something bigger than either of them alone. They raise their glasses to toast each other because they know that a connection like this is rare and valuable and well worth celebrating.

Things to consider: If you asked about love, it is pretty clear that the answer is a resounding yes. Of course, you might have asked, "Is this relationship worth hanging on to?"—in which case the answer is also yes, unless you know in your heart that what you are looking for—this partnership and commitment—isn't going to happen in whatever relationship you were asking about. For the most part, though, the Two of Cups is a thoroughly positive card, denoting a relationship (romantic or otherwise) that is based on trust and mutual respect. That's a good thing, no matter what the connection is.

Three of Cups

★★★

"EVERYTHING IS BETTER WHEN SHARED WITH FRIENDS."

Three of Cups

Dance as if no one is watching,
and raise a cup to joy and friendship.

What could be better than coming together in merriment and joy? If you ask these three witches, they would tell you, "Not much!" They may be different ages and from different paths, but they support each other's endeavors and cheer each other on through good and bad. On this day they may be celebrating the achievement one has made or simply enjoying the moment. What does it matter? They're together and the moon is overhead, and that is reason enough to dance.

Things to consider: The Three of Cups almost always represents a group of women, although there is nothing to say it couldn't stand for any supportive bunch of people. They may be family or friends, but either way, you know you can rely on these particular folks to be there for you. Who do you celebrate with in your life? If you can't answer that question, it may be time to create your own circle of kindred spirits. Hopefully you are fortunate enough to know who these witches stand for in your life, and you will be sharing joy with them again soon.

Four of Cups

★★★

"IS THAT THE BEST
YOU CAN DO?"

Four of Cups

I'm sure something better will come along if I wait long enough.

The young sage in the Four of Cups isn't happy with his work. Of course, that's not unusual. Truth be told, he's never really satisfied. His hard-working apprentice tries offering him a different option, but our sage knows it isn't quite right. After all, it isn't perfect, and therefore it isn't good enough. He'll keep rejecting things; surely just the right one will come along sooner or later. If not, our sage would rather have nothing at all.

Things to consider: Are you feeling bored and dissatisfied with your life, your job, or your relationships, but you can't quite figure out why or what it is you *do* want? Maybe it's not them, it's you. There's nothing wrong with wanting something better or not settling when a situation isn't working for you. But you don't want saying no to become a habit. The Four of Cups is a reminder to make sure that you aren't turning away good options just because you think that something perfect will eventually appear as if by magic. Are your expectations realistic? Is it possible that what you've been waiting for has already been here all along, but you just weren't seeing it with clear eyes? Perhaps it is time to take another look around and see what you've been missing.

Five of Cups

★★★

"RUINED!
IT'S ALL RUINED!"

Five of Cups

Are you so focused on the negative that you're missing the good stuff?

Let's face it: in life, bad things happen. You make plans, you work hard, everything is all set, and WHAM: disaster. The car breaks down, your perfect vacation gets rained out, you slip and break your leg two days before your wedding. It's easy to get discouraged and lose track of the big picture; suddenly, everything is ruined! But is it? Everything, really? Or are you just so focused on the bad stuff that you forget about all the good? After all, the car may be broken, but no one got hurt. You still got to spend your vacation with family and play all those fun board games. And maybe you hobbled down the aisle on a pair of crutches, but you've got someone who loves you. Don't let the bumps in life distract you from all the blessings you still have.

Things to consider: Glass half full or glass half empty? The Five of Cups reminds you that no matter how many cups you may spill, you still have plenty filled to the brim. Are you focusing all your attention on the negative and crying over spilled milk? Maybe it is time to look around at the things that are working for you, and count your blessings. If you don't have milk, you'll just have to drink lemonade.

Six of Cups

★★★

"HERE, LET ME
GIVE YOU THIS."

Six of Cups

Sometimes the smallest gesture,
made with no expectation of return,
can touch the heart in profound ways.

An act of kindness is a powerful thing. One small gesture can change a day from bad to good. A series of little gifts, given with no expectation of receiving anything in return, can snowball into a mountain of joy if people pass them along to others. A good memory held in the heart may give someone strength in the darkest of moments. There is an innocence in a simple act of kindness that is often missing from our lives. The Six of Cups reminds us of the value of the giving and receiving of little moments of joy.

Things to consider: You have probably heard the phrase "random acts of kindness." These are those small, unexpected gestures that put a smile on someone's face, like allowing an elderly person to take your seat on the bus or feeding a parking meter so some stranger doesn't get a ticket. Have you been practicing kindness? If not, you might want to try it. Say something nice to everyone you meet for a day or give an unexpected gift just to show someone you love them. If someone has been kind to you recently, be sure to pass it along.

Sometimes the Six of Cups is a reminder to hang on to good memories and not get too jaded or negative in the way you view the world. If there isn't enough kindness in your life, maybe you just need to create some yourself.

Notes

Seven of Cups

★★★

"THIS ONE! NO, WAIT;
THAT ONE. NO—ARGH!"

Seven of Cups

Sometimes you just have to make a decision. It's better to make a bad choice than no choice at all.

The poor witch in the Seven of Cups card is completely stymied. She has to make a decision but just can't make up her mind—not because she has no good choices, but rather because she has too many, all of them good. What's a witch to do? If she picks the cup filled with wisdom, she might miss out on riches or power. But if she chooses hearth and home, she might not be able to go on a great adventure. Every time she thinks she has made up her mind, something else occurs to her and she is back to being stuck again. The wise old crone behind the counter is being as patient as she can, but she knows what we all learn eventually: forward movement requires that you pick an option and run with it, even if that means you run the risk of making the wrong choice.

Things to consider: Are you facing a multitude of choices? If the Seven of Cups appears in your reading, it probably means two things. One, that there isn't really a bad option; no matter which one you choose, things are going to turn out fine. And two, it's time to make a decision already! Just pick one and get on with things. You're not getting any younger sitting there trying to make up your mind.

Eight of Cups

★★★

"SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO WALK IN ANOTHER DIRECTION."

Eight of Cups

Just because you have everything you want doesn't mean you have what you need.

The witch in the Eight of Cups has clearly made a major decision; she has turned her back on what many others would consider a darned good situation and deliberately set off in a new direction. Why on earth would she do that? Is she crazy? Her friends and family may think so, but she knows that no matter how appealing and safe her current life might seem to others, it isn't what her heart needs. She is being called to a new path, and no matter what she has to give up to do so, she is going to follow that call.

Things to consider: If you are looking at this card, you may be at a turning point in your life. Are you feeling as though there is something missing, even though your circumstances seem fine on the surface? Are there issues that make an otherwise good situation not as perfect as you thought it would be (or as others might think, looking in from the outside)? Have you been trying to ignore a strong call to do something different—maybe even something that seems like it would be a crazy choice?

The Eight of Cups may indicate a dramatic change in a relationship or career that used to bring you satisfaction and no

longer does, or simply that it is time for you to acknowledge it is time to walk away from your old safe life and into something new that holds the potential for future happiness.

Notes

Nine of Cups

★★★

"SUCCESS AT LAST!"

Nine of Cups

Success is wonderful…but
don't let it go to your head.

The Nine of Cups used to be called the wish card. You would make a wish at the beginning of the reading, and if the Nine of Cups appeared, your wish was sure to be granted. Its presence in a reading is certainly a good sign that you have either achieved what you'd hoped to or are well on your way to doing so. But don't get too cocky; after all, life is uncertain, and wishes are tricky things. Yes, you should take time out to celebrate every achievement along the way. But the journey still continues, and you want to keep an eye out for future wishes too.

Things to consider: If you've had a wish granted or a dream come true, congratulations! Especially if you have achieved a goal you've been working hard on for a while. Just remember that nobody likes a smug witch. This card can be a sign of good things here and now or waiting in the future, but it can also be a warning that you need to keep your eyes on the prize and maintain your good fortune through hard work and effort.

Ten of Cups

★★★

"THE END OF THE RAINBOW
IS RIGHT HERE."

Ten of Cups

Joy is found not in things but in people.
Life overflows with prosperity of the heart.

This may be the most joyful card in the deck, but the shared bliss found in the Ten of Cups doesn't just happen by accident. The king and queen worked hard over many years to create this perfect day in a nearly perfect life. Their happiness comes not from money or success but from having people to share their joy. This card depicts the emotional satisfaction we all long for, filled with optimism but taking nothing for granted.

Things to consider: The Ten of Cups is another card with no downside. Its presence in a reading can only be a good thing. It reminds us that the truest gifts in life aren't power or wealth but rather having true friends and people who love us. You may want to ask yourself if you are putting enough effort into your relationships with others or appreciating them for the joy they bring to your life.

If this card lies in a future position, your efforts to connect with others will almost certainly lead to some form of happily ever after. But remember that even bliss takes work to maintain, and no life, no matter how wonderful, is without its tough moments. You just won't have to go through them alone.

Page of Cups

★★★

"LET INSPIRATION FLOW!"

Page of Cups

Embrace creativity, learn new skills, open up to joy—you're never too old to be young at heart.

The Page of Cups is all about youthful enthusiasm for something new—a new craft, a new adventure, a new love. Of course, you don't have to be young in years to have this kind of crazy carried-away feeling. Mind you, sometimes this kind of impetuous appetite for life can get the poor page into trouble, so you might need to be a little patient, or you could go along for the ride and maybe learn something new.

Things to consider: In a reading the pages often represent young people in our lives: our children or students, for instance. But they can also stand for a certain frame of mind. Are you someone who is constantly running from one new enthusiasm to another? You may be the Page of Cups. If so, you may want to ask yourself if this approach is working for you or not. Have you been stuck in a rut? Then maybe the Page of Cups is just what you need to give you a push in a new direction.

Knight of Cups

★★★

"I FOLLOW WHEREVER
MY HEART LEADS."

Knight of Cups

Passion is a wonderful thing, but be careful not to let your heart completely overrule your head.

The Knight of Cups is a romantic soul; you might even say he is a fool for love. He tends to get wrapped up in his own dreams and visions, following them to the exclusion of the practical world. Whatever he is pursuing at the moment, he does it with his whole heart. But tomorrow his heart may turn to something new, and he will be just as passionate about that. The Knight of Cups isn't shallow—far from it. He's just following his bliss. Hopefully it won't lead him off a cliff.

Things to consider: If the Knight of Cups shows up in a reading, it may be a clue that you are dealing with someone with good intentions but not a lot of follow-through. That man who is wooing you madly? You might want to be a little cautious. Your child/friend/lover who comes to you with a fabulous can't-fail scheme? Take a closer look before you get pulled into the fantasy. This doesn't mean you can't jump in and follow the Knight of Cups' dream too; just make sure you don't plan the rest of your life based on it.

If this card represents you in a reading, it might be a suggestion that you are too wrapped up in your own hopes and dreams, too emotional to make a rational decision. Perhaps it

would be a good time to step back and see if whatever you are so excited about—a lover, an idea, a plan for something grand—really stands up in the bright light of reality.

Notes

Queen of Cups

★★★

"BLESSED IS SHE WHO GIVES
WITH HER WHOLE HEART."

Queen of Cups

Find those who will nurture you and your endeavors, and open yourself to their gifts.

The Queen of Cups is the embodiment of heart and passion. She will be there when you need help, advice, or just a warm hug, and she will encourage you in your own passions. The queen is generous of spirit; intuitive and kind, she can be relied on for guidance, especially when you are too overwhelmed with your own emotions to make sensible decisions. She may be a mother, a patroness, or a friend. Maybe she is even you.

Things to consider: Everyone needs a Queen of Cups in their life, and we all have the capacity to be this person for others. If she shows up in your reading, the queen may already be present; have you taken advantage of the aid she offers you? You might have to go looking for her, but if you do, it will be worth the effort.

Perhaps you take the role of Queen of Cups for others. If so, you are to be admired and commended. Just be careful not to give so much of yourself that your cup becomes empty and you have nothing left for your own needs.

King of Cups

★★★

"I RULE MY EMOTIONS;
THEY DO NOT RULE ME."

King of Cups

It is good to be in control, but be careful not to separate yourself too much from others.

The King of Cups is a generous man. He supports the arts and encourages creative endeavors of all kinds. Less emotional than his queen, he tends to watch the world around him with a benevolent eye but from a distance. You've heard the expression "no man is an island," right? It is just possible that the King of Cups is the exception to that rule. Of course, he owns the island, so maybe that helps. He might even invite you to join him there if you can convince him your cause is worthy.

Things to consider: If the King of Cups represents someone else in your reading, he probably stands for someone who is a figure of power in your life but who keeps a little bit of emotional distance, no matter what the relationship. He may be supportive, even loving, but also a little wary of getting involved. He is wise and experienced, after all, and knows that love can be complicated. If the king represents you, this might be a good time to take a closer look at your interactions with others. Are you willing to help out as long as you don't have to get too close? If you are holding your heart a little too safe, perhaps it is time to leave the island and come join the rest of the world.

Ace of Wands

★★★

"TAKE THE ENERGY
AND RUN WITH IT!"

Ace of Wands

Sometimes the universe gives you a boost; don't miss an opportunity when it comes along filled with potential.

The Ace of Wands is a powerful card, filled with potential. The universe is offering you a gift: creativity, success, spirituality—who knows what it might be? But, like all such gifts, this one won't last forever. When it appears, be sure to grab it and make the most of the energy and possibilities it holds; this moment may not come around again. Embrace your own inner fire and whatever fabulous things are coming your way.

Things to consider: When the Ace of Wands appears in a reading, it often can be an indication of something wonderful, powerful, and life changing. What's happening in your life right now? Are you taking advantage of all the opportunities in front of you?

If the Ace of Wands shows up as a future card, it is both a promise and a warning; be alert so you don't miss this moment when it gets here. The ace may also represent a symbol of your own inner power. After all, the universe lies within us as much as it lies without. Make sure you are channeling your strengths and energy in the most productive and positive ways possible!

Two of Wands

★★★

"WHAT TO DO?
WHAT TO DO?"

Two of Wands

It is good to spend time contemplating your options, but sooner or later you are going to have to choose one. Which direction pulls most strongly?

This young sage has the whole world at his feet—he only has to choose which way to go. The future is an open book, a blank slate full of possibilities. He ponders them all, wondering which path will bring success and happiness. After all, he wants to be sure he chooses the right one. But you have to wonder how long he has been standing there trying to make this decision or if, in fact, he will ever actually pick one and get on with it.

Things to consider: It is a wonderful thing to have a number of choices, especially if they are all good options. Pondering all the options and planning for the future is a sign of wisdom and maturity, and we all want to be sure we make the right selection when faced with an important decision. But sooner or later you have to actually pick something. Are you dreaming your life away, lost in the possibilities? Do you spend more time thinking of the future than actually living in the present or are you really getting ready to make a move? Only you can decide if now is the right time, but don't wait forever.

Four of Wands

★★★

"IT'S A PARTY!
PASS THE CAKE!"

Four of Wands

Sometimes you just have to celebrate the day. Whether there is a special occasion, the achievement of a goal, or just because the sun is shining, gather up your friends and family, and enjoy the moment!

It's a party! These witches are clearly gathered together to celebrate something special. It might be the culmination of a long, difficult journey (some momentous achievement, perhaps) or the start of something new (a wedding, maybe, or a new home). Either way, it is worth observing the moment and the day, preferably in the company of friends and family. Everything's coming up roses—and there's cake.

Things to consider: Usually, no matter where it falls in a reading, the Four of Wands is a great card. If it is your final card, it is a pretty good indication of a happy future. (Although if the Four of Wands is in a past position, it can mean that once you had a happy marriage or life and now things aren't so great.) It can stand for success, good relationships, happy family life, or even an actual wedding. Either way, congratulations and mazel tov!

Five of Wands

★★★

"I KNOW BEST!
NO, I DO!"

Five of Wands

Sometimes it is hard to work with other people. Other times, it's impossible.

These witches are the best of friends, and all of them are skillful and knowledgeable. Just think of what they could achieve if they could actually cooperate. Unfortunately, each one is sure that she has the best recipe or knows the most powerful ingredients or in which direction to stir the pot. Now they're so busy arguing that nobody is stirring the pot, and you can almost see the explosion that is sure to come. Let's hope they come to their senses in time and remember that they can achieve much more working together if they can all just stop trying to be the one who is right.

Things to consider: If the Five of Wands shows up in your reading, it probably means that you are dealing with some kind of chaotic situation involving other people. Family, coworkers, friends—whoever it is, they clearly aren't playing nice together. Are you? Maybe you can be the peacemaker, the one who helps everyone come together in a more productive way. Maybe this is a situation that can't be resolved, and you would be better off walking away. Sadly, you can't make other people behave reasonably, but you can make sure that you aren't making things worse by letting your ego or pride get in the way of cooperation. You wouldn't do that, would you?

Six of Wands

★★★

"VICTORY IS SWEET, BUT
NO ONE ACHIEVES SUCCESS
COMPLETELY ON THEIR OWN."

Six of Wands

It is good to be recognized for our achievements. It is also good to be aware of how we got to where we are now.

Everyone is so proud of the witch in this picture. She has clearly done something momentous and is being properly rewarded for her achievements. But you can tell that she is still humble, maybe even a little uncomfortable with all the attention. This witch knows that she is part of a community, and that anything she does reflects at least as much on those around her as it does on her own efforts. She is pleased to be recognized but finds just as much pleasure in sharing the moment with those who helped her get to this place.

Things to consider: The Six of Wands is a sign that you are doing something right or soon will be recognized for your efforts. Hurray for you! Who should you be thanking for helping you? Or, if this card refers to someone else in the reading, maybe you should be patting yourself on the back for aiding in another's achievement. Either way, the Six of Wands is always a positive indicator. *Huzzah!*

Seven of Wands

★★★

"COME ON, SHOW ME
WHAT YOU'VE GOT!"

Seven of Wands

Just because you feel like everyone is out to get you doesn't mean they are. Of course, it doesn't mean they aren't, either.

That witch looks ready for anything, doesn't she? She and her faithful companion are prepared to defend themselves to the very end, no matter what comes at them. You can almost see her beckoning with one finger, saying, "Bring it on." She may be wary and on guard, but she's not afraid. The question is, is there anything left to guard against? Sometimes when you've been fighting for a long time, the hardest part is knowing when it is finally okay to put down your wand and relax.

Things to consider: If you get the Seven of Wands, you've probably been fighting a tough battle—or three. Or maybe you're just prepared to fight because you're sure that someone is out to do you harm. But is there really a reason to be constantly on your guard or are you wasting precious time, energy, and resources trying to be prepared for bad things to happen at any time, when, in fact, everything is fine? Ask yourself: Who am I defending against? Are they really out to get me or am I just afraid they might be? Being on high alert all the time is exhausting. Make sure you're only doing it if it is really necessary. If it's not, maybe now would be a good time to turn some of that energy into something more productive.

Eight of Wands

★★★

"THINGS ARE REALLY
HAPPENING NOW!"

Eight of Wands

There are moments when things come together and take on a life of their own, creating a momentum that's hard to stop. This may be one of those moments.

The eights tend to be about movement, some of it more productive than others. The Eight of Wands in particular is about events that have been set in motion. This may mean new starts or a time when things are happening that seem to be out of control. The trick is to ride the wind and turn that forward motion into something that works for your benefit.

Things to consider: This card may indicate that something in your life is moving pretty swiftly. Did you set something in motion on purpose? If so, this card is a good sign that it is going your way. If you feel like you are being swept up in events someone else set in motion, that's not necessarily a bad thing. Just ask yourself what you can do to make the best of whatever is happening. New beginnings can be exciting, and anything could happen now. This might be a good time to figure out what you want, and use this energy to move in that direction.

Nine of Wands

★★★

"I'M STILL STANDING."

Nine of Wands

You may be battered and bruised, but you will survive to fight another day, or maybe you won't have to fight at all; that might make for a nice change of pace.

The witch on this card clearly has been having a tough time. She's fought battles—won a few, maybe lost more. You can be pretty sure that she'd like to be doing anything other than preparing for another one. But that doesn't mean she's ready to give up; quite the contrary. She'll keep going as long as she has to. In the end, nothing can break her spirit, which doesn't mean she couldn't use a break and maybe a nice picnic lunch. Maybe tomorrow.

Things to consider: Life is full of battles, large and small. The trick is to choose which ones you are going to fight. Are you using precious energy on issues too small to really matter? Do you seem to end up fighting the same battle over and over again? There is no dishonor in walking away from a fight if it isn't worth the effort. But if you are fighting for something important, don't give up. You are tougher than you think.

Ten of Wands

★★★

"I'VE GOT IT...I'VE GOT IT...
MAYBE I DON'T GOT IT."

Ten of Wands

Life can hand you a lot of burdens to carry.
Only you can choose which ones to keep hauling
around and which ones to put down.

That poor witch sure is carrying a lot, isn't she? It is a wonderful thing to be of service to others. There is satisfaction to be gained from assisting those who need it and in helping family and friends. And coworkers. And that guy on the street. Just be sure that you aren't spreading yourself too thin. If you find yourself feeling exhausted and drained, maybe you are doing too much for too many on a regular basis.

Things to consider: The Ten of Wands almost always indicates someone who is not only carrying a heavy burden but is probably toiling under burdens that really belong to others. Are you one of those people who is always trying to fix everyone else's problems? Do you carry the load for your family, your friends, and everyone else who crosses your path? If so, it is probably time to take another look at what burdens you are carrying. Figure out which ones don't truly belong to you, then put them down. I mean it: put them down right now! Remember that if you allow yourself to become completely drained trying to be everything for everybody, you will eventually reach a point where you can't do anything for anyone, including yourself. And that doesn't benefit you or those you love, does it?

Page of Wands

★★★

"NEW BEGINNINGS CAN BE BOTH EXCITING AND FRIGHTENING."

Page of Wands

It can be intimidating to start on a new path, but inspiration and passion can help you take that first step.

There is nothing more intimidating than starting something completely new and different. The Page of Wands knows this. While he is a tiny bit frightened, he isn't going to let that fear stop him from following the exciting new path that lies before him. If you've been waiting for a sign that it is time for you to follow a new path, this is probably it. The page can also represent someone young and eager in your life—perhaps a child whose time has come to fly the nest or even someone young at heart who is simply ready to embark on a whole new life.

Things to consider: The pages are often either those in need of your help and guidance or they can help you along your path, though not in as powerful a way as a knight, a queen, or a king. That doesn't mean they can't be important, though. The Page of Wands represents eagerness and enthusiasm, and who couldn't use more of that? Perhaps it is just time to look at the paths you might be missing due to fear or hesitation, and give yourself the boost you've been waiting for.

Knight of Wands

★★★

"ADVENTURE AWAITS!"

Knight of Wands

Passion, excitement, and adventure await if you are brave enough to move forward despite the risks.

The Knight of Wands is always ready for adventure. He is eager and inquisitive, forceful and brave, cheerful in the face of adversity. In short, he is a great ally to have on your side. On the other hand, there are times when he may be racing into the mouth of a dragon and taking you with him. If the Knight of Wands shows up in your reading, it could be an indication that you have a faithful friend, a family member who is dedicated to your cause, or a man who is willing to face the future at your side. It could also mean that you are letting passion carry you away without thinking—not that that is always a bad thing...

Things to consider: Most of the time, the Knight of Wands shows up in a reading to represent someone else in your life: a son or a young and adventurous friend or lover. If so, his presence is probably a good thing as long as you're not being swept along willy-nilly with his passion. Sometimes the knight is an indication that it is time for you to take action. No more planning or thinking things through—just move forward in the direction you know you want to go, but be aware that there may be dragons at the end of your journey.

Queen of Wands

★★★

"QUEEN, GODDESS, MOTHER, MAIDEN, CRONE; TIME TO ROCK THAT FEMALE ENERGY!"

Queen of Wands

You can be strong and nurturing at the same time; you don't have to just pick one.

No commonplace throne will do for this queen. She sits perched on a dragon—tame for now. The flowers she holds show her nurturing side, but don't make the mistake of thinking she is soft. The Queen of Wands is kind and tough, but she doesn't encourage sitting around feeling sorry for yourself. Rather, she believes in taking your passion, whatever it is, and turning it into glorious and productive forward movement. The queen can represent a strong female figure in your life, someone who will support you as you grow and change, or she may be you—a symbol of the best "you" possible. If so, make sure you are moving in a direction that empowers and enriches your life.

Things to consider: Is there a strong female figure who is influencing your life right now? If so, you may want to listen carefully to what she is encouraging you to do. Don't follow blindly, of course, but don't ignore her either. If this card falls in a reading in such a way that it is clear the queen represents you, it is an indication that you are strong enough to do whatever is necessary. What are you waiting for?

King of Wands

★★★

"PLAN FOR THE FUTURE,
BUT ACT RIGHT NOW."

King of Wands

Forge ahead with determination in the pursuit of your goals. Take charge of your own destiny.

The King of Wands has his map laid out, and he knows exactly where he is going and what he is going to do when he gets there. It looks like even the cat is going to fall in line. We all want to rule our own lives, but the real world requires plenty of compromise. The King of Wands, on the other hand, knows what he wants and will do what it takes to get it. He is active, passionate, and driven. If this king appears in your reading, he may represent a strong male figure who is influencing your life—maybe for the better, maybe not. He also may be a reminder that sometimes it is important to take control of your own destiny.

Things to consider: Who is controlling your life and dictating the way your future will unfold? Is it you or someone else? If so, is he helping or hurting you? Don't hand over your own power without a good reason, although it is fine to take help from someone who is in a position to give you a push in the right direction. Is there some area of your life where you need to step up and take charge? If so, now is probably the time to do it.

Ace of Pentacles

★★★

"IT'S ALL GOOD!"

Ace of Pentacles

There is unlimited potential for unlimited success.

A young witch holds up a magical coin. In the background the sun is rising on a beautiful day. Even the cat radiates contentment. The Ace of Pentacles is all about the good stuff: luck, opportunity, joy—you name it; if it is something good, this card may be bringing it your way. Because the Pentacles tend to represent prosperity, career, and home, this card may be an indication of good news having something to do with one of those. Maybe it is just an indication that things are going in the direction you were hoping for. No matter what, if this card shows up in your reading, you can be pretty sure it is carrying good news with it. If it is the future card at the end of the reading, then everything is coming up roses!

Things to consider: If you asked a question and got the Ace of Pentacles in response, the answer is almost certainly a resounding yes. No matter where it falls in a reading, this card is positive. Now you just need to figure out how you are going to make the most out of the opportunities that are coming your way.

Two of Pentacles

★★★

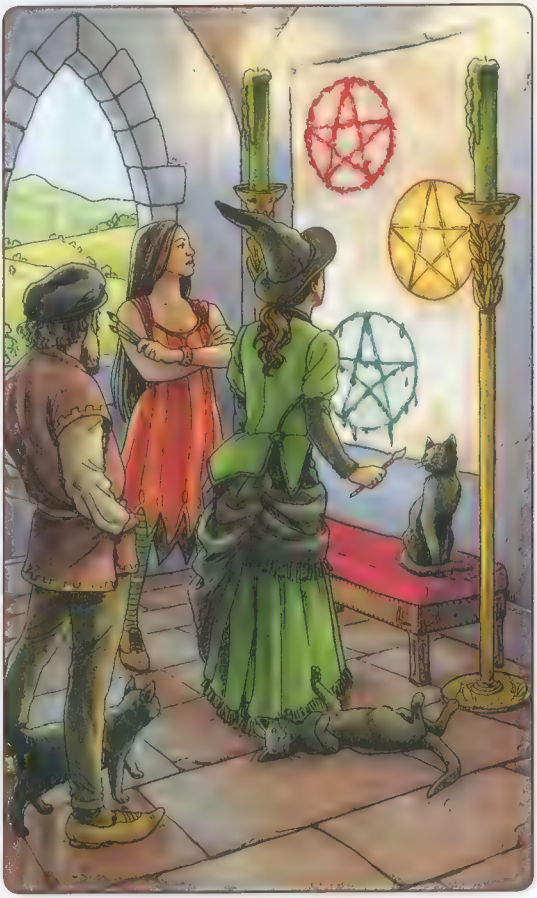
"LIFE IS A
BALANCING ACT."

Two of Pentacles

Work and play, striving and resting;
all things have their time and place.

We all try to live a balanced life, but let's face it: few of us succeed. Like the witch on the card, we do our best to keep everything in sync, but life is full of unexpected challenges and as soon as we think we've got it all together, something new is thrown into the mix and we are back to trying to find an even footing. The truth is, no one ever manages to maintain perfect balance for long. All we can do is keep on trying and do our best in the face of the real-world issues we all confront.

Things to consider: Sometimes this card shows up to remind us that we need to focus a little more attention on balance. Are you working too much and playing too little? Is all of your focus on one area of your life, to the detriment of the others? Then it could be that you need to shift things around a bit. On the other hand, maybe this card is an indication that you are worrying too much about getting everything right all the time. If that sounds like you, perhaps the Two of Pentacles has shown up to remind you to cut yourself a little slack; no one gets it right all the time, and that's okay.



Three of Pentacles

★★★

"WORKING TOGETHER,
WE CAN CREATE SOMETHING
WONDERFUL."

Three of Pentacles

Many hands make light work, as long as you share a common purpose and vision and everyone plays nice.

Three witches are coming together to create something even greater than they could make on their own. Their cats clearly approve. It can be hard to work with others, but the rewards are worth the trouble of trying to make differing viewpoints mesh. After all, they don't say "two heads are better than one" for nothing. If you are involved in a project with others (or trying to deal with family issues, for instance), try to see where everyone else involved is coming from, and keep an open mind. Just because someone doesn't think just like you do doesn't make their ideas any less valid or useful. After all, it takes many instruments to make an orchestra, but oh, how beautiful the music!

Things to consider: If this card shows up in a reading, it is an indication that you are either presently involved with others in a way that requires cooperation or you soon will be. This is almost always a good thing and a gift to be appreciated. Who are you working with, and are you doing your best to be part of the team? Is there anything you could do to make the interaction go more smoothly? Is there someone who is not working well with others? If so, what is your best way to deal with this fact in a productive and useful manner?

Four of Pentacles

★★★

"FEAR OF NOT HAVING ENOUGH
MAY BE MORE HARMFUL
THAN THE LACK ITSELF."

Four of Pentacles

It is good to be cautious and careful with what we have, but there is such a thing as holding on too tightly; this goes for emotions as well as for money.

The poor witch on the Four of Pentacles is clearly worried about money. The funny thing is, he probably has more than enough for what he needs, but he is so sure he doesn't or won't in the future that all he does is fret about it. That's not much of a way to live. Money is important; you only have to deal with the lack of it to find out that's true. Still, if all you do is worry about having enough money, you're probably not going to have much of a life, either. So how much money is enough? And is there such a thing as too much focus on security?

Things to consider: Not having enough money can be scary. The question you need to ask yourself is this: how much do I need to truly be okay? Are your financial concerns real (maybe they are) or are they based on a perception of lack because of past experience or fears for the future? Sometimes we hold so tightly to what we perceive as necessary that we miss the big picture. If this card shows up in your reading, you may want to take a closer look at how you are dealing with financial issues and how much your emotions are coloring your attitude toward money.

Five of Pentacles

★★★

"BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE."

Five of Pentacles

Sometimes times are tough. Hang in there. Things will get better, and you are not as alone as you feel.

A witch, her young companion, and her cat struggle through a cold, snowy night. They can see shelter ahead, but will they be welcome there or will they be left out in the cold? Chances are, if this card has shown up in your read-

there are those who are willing to give it freely? Remember that giving is a cycle, and if you have to take help now, you can always pass it on to someone else when things get better. Accepting assistance during a tough time doesn't make you any less, and it just might bring joy to the person you allow to help you.

Notes

Seven of Pentacles

★★★

"HOW DOES YOUR
GARDEN GROW?"

Seven of Pentacles

At a certain point in any endeavor it is good to stop and take stock, but sometimes all you can do is wait for things to come to fruition.

You've planted the seeds and tended the growing shoots to the best of your ability; now all you can do is wait and see how things turn out. The Seven of Pentacles isn't about making more effort; the time for that has past. Now is when you take a good look at what you've accomplished and assess it as thoughtfully as you can. Are the results what you hoped for? Will your efforts continue to grow and prosper? Only time will tell for sure, but the Seven of Pentacles is an indication that you are getting close to seeing what harvest your hard work will bear.

Things to consider: Do you have any long-term projects coming to fruition? Have you been waiting for something important? Odds are, this card means that you are getting close. But resist the urge to push harder in the hopes of making things happen faster—it won't help, and it might hurt. If you are on the verge of something, you may need to be patient and wait to see what happens. But the Seven of Pentacles is a good sign, so you might want to take a deep breath and try to relax.

Eight of Pentacles

★★★

"HARD WORK IS ITS
OWN REWARD."

Eight of Pentacles

Diligence and attention to detail help to hone our skills and lay the building blocks to a successful future.

If you could talk to the witch on this card, she would probably say something like, "Anything worth doing is worth doing well." The Eight of Pentacles isn't just about working for money or success; it is about bringing your best self to the task. There is satisfaction to be gained from knowing you are doing the best job possible, whether or not you are getting rich doing it. This card is about bringing passion to your work, whether it is something professional, a craft, or even tending a garden. Put your heart and soul into whatever you do, and success is sure to follow.

Things to consider: Are your work and your passion the same thing? If they're not, are you doing your best anyway? Can you find ways to make your effort be its own reward? What do you work at that makes you happy or proud or both? Is there a challenge in your work, something that will help you to develop skills that will serve you later? If you feel as though you are not being appreciated for your efforts, is there a way to step up your game a notch? And don't forget to be proud of yourself, no matter what others think.

Nine of Pentacles

★★★

"I CREATE MY OWN SUCCESS, AND ALL IS WELL IN MY WORLD."

Nine of Pentacles

There is a certain satisfaction to be had in knowing that you have earned everything you have through your own efforts.

You've worked hard, and now that work is finally paying off. Congratulations! Whenever the Nine of Pentacles appears, it indicates a time when you can relax a little and bask in your achievements. Not that you can stop working altogether, of course, since the world doesn't stand still, but maybe slow down a bit and catch your breath, even treat yourself to something special as a pat on the back. You deserve a lot of credit, so be sure you give it to yourself.

Things to consider: The Nine of Pentacles may reflect current success or be an indication that such success is soon to come. Either way, it refers to goals you've achieved through your own efforts and merit; you made it happen or are working on making it happen. Are you giving yourself enough credit? If you've been pushing hard toward some goal, are you giving yourself a chance to rest and recover before you move on to the next one? Have you spent so much time and energy focused on your endeavors that you've been ignoring people or things that are important? If so, now might be a time to remedy that.

Ten of Pentacles

★★★

"AND THEY ALL LIVED
HAPPILY EVER AFTER..."

Ten of Pentacles

Happiness is more than money; success is more than wealth. Abundance comes in many forms. Be sure you live each moment to the fullest, especially those shared with others.

Money doesn't guarantee happiness, but a certain level of financial security can definitely make it easier to relax and enjoy what you have. The Ten of Pentacles is an indication that you have or will attain your desires. It looks like everything is finally coming up roses. Just remember that roses have a life-cycle too, and nothing living stays at its peak forever. Enjoy the good days while you are living them, and let the strengths you derive from home and success help you be even better prepared for whatever life will throw at you next.

Things to consider: This card is all about getting what you want and reveling in it, so you might want to ask yourself what you really want. Do you have it or some reasonable version of it? If so, make sure that you are taking the time and energy to appreciate it. Spend more time with those you love, doing what you love to do. Enjoy your work as much as your play. If you are still striving, this card is encouragement; it says you're getting there, keep at it! Success is just around the corner—or maybe across the street, down a block, and then around the corner. But keep plugging away at it. You're definitely on the right track.

Page of Pentacles

★★★

"I AM EAGER TO SEE WHAT
THE FUTURE HOLDS."

Page of Pentacles

My path is wide open, and I am prepared for new adventures.

The Page of Pentacles is ready and eager to get started down a new road. He or she may be young or merely young in spirit and experience, about to begin something different from whatever has been done in the past. The page may represent a new job, a new direction for success and prosperity, or a younger person who is depending on you to act as a guide or mentor. The Page of Pentacles is the best prepared of all the pages for whatever lies ahead, but don't mistake preparation for knowledge. The pages sometimes stumble and fall, but they can teach you things along the way if you are paying attention.

Things to consider: Is there someone young (or young at heart) who is depending on you at work or in some kind of financial way? This could represent one or more of your children, if you have them. If so, make sure that whatever help you give them leads them in the direction of their own independence. If this card represents you or something specific in your life, have you been considering starting a new endeavor or beginning over again in a new career? Now might be the time to go for it!

Knight of Pentacles

★★★

"SLOW AND STEADY
WINS THE RACE."

Knight of Pentacles

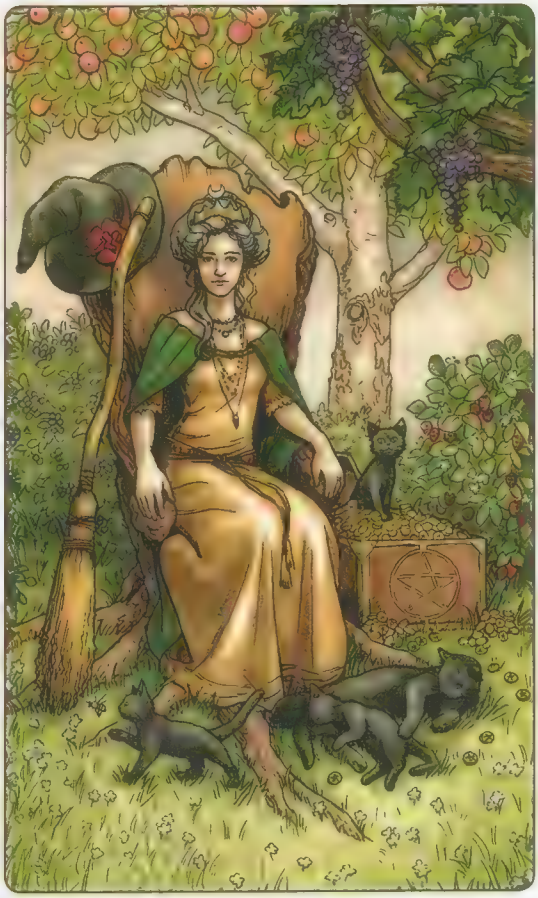
I have all the tools I need for a prosperous and successful future.

A young knight sets off on an adventure. You can see he isn't in a hurry and he has packed all his tools so he is prepared for whatever lies ahead. The Knight of Pentacles, like all the knights, is about forward movement of some kind. Unlike the others, however, the Knight of Pentacles never rushes in. He plans out his goals and his approach, and he does his research to be sure of his path before he takes even one step. That doesn't make him any less powerful, however, just slower and more methodical. This can be a good thing, especially if you have a tendency to get carried away. The knight's energy is strong and sure, and no less an instrument for change than the other knights—just more planning ahead and less charging ahead, no matter what the obstacles are.

Things to consider: If this card represents you in the reading, it is a twofold suggestion. One, that it is time to make changes and move forward in your life. And two, that you need to do so cautiously and methodically, checking into all your options before making a final decision on which direction to take. Are you rushing into something too fast? This is a reminder to take a breath and slow down. Not moving at all

for fear of getting it wrong? Then consider whether or not you have all your ducks in a row, and if you do, then take the first step in a new direction, confident in your own ability to handle whatever comes. Keep your eye on the prize further down the road, starting with small steps if that is all you can do right now. If the Knight of Pentacles is someone else, then you can probably depend on this person to help you get where you want to go. Just try to be patient because it isn't going to happen overnight!

Notes



Queen of Pentacles

★★★

"PROSPERITY AND ABUNDANCE
COME IN MANY FORMS."

Queen of Pentacles

You have everything you need and most of what you want. Life is full of gifts if you open your heart and spirit to them.

This queen is at ease on her wooden throne, which still has its roots in the dirt. She has abundance in many forms and radiates a calm serenity that shows she is rooted too. A mama cat and her kittens play joyfully at her feet. Prosperity is as much a state of mind as it is the state of your bank account. There is abundance all around you and people who will help you achieve your goals. If you are rooted in the earth and tuned in to the glory of the world around you, it is that much more likely that you too will blossom and grow. Be the queen of your own domain, but rule with love and an open heart.

Things to consider: Do you appreciate the riches in your life, whatever form they take? Are you open to new opportunities? Are you fully present in your own life? How can you make the most of the possibilities available to you now, and how can you prepare for any new possibilities that lie ahead? Embrace your own power without fear. Be open to help from others who are willing to work for your benefit. Remember that prosperity doesn't have to mean money.

King of Pentacles

★★★

"YOU CAN HAVE YOUR
CAKE AND EAT IT TOO."

King of Pentacles

Work hard, do good for others,
and all will be well.

This king is clearly successful but also rooted in the earth. He knows that it is important to savor the good things in life, such as animal companions, wine, and chocolate cake. The King of Pentacles represents prosperity and abundance, but more than that, his strength comes from being strongly rooted in his own success and the success of those around him. The king can represent your own financial situation or he can indicate a strong male figure who is willing to help you achieve prosperity and security, whether on the job or at home.

Things to consider: The kings are all strong male figures, but that doesn't mean that a king card can't represent a woman, although it is less common. If this card falls at a place in the reading where it stands for you, it indicates that your focus is on success and money. This isn't a bad thing, but be careful not to let your desire for security or nice belongings sweep you away. If there is a king figure in your life—husband, father, boss—are you taking full advantage of the gifts he is offering you? And is what he offers truly what you want?

There are as many different ways to use the tarot as there are people who read it, but there are a few fairly common spreads, or ways to lay out the cards, that are used most often. If you want to explore further, there are lots of great books on reading tarot cards that go into much more complicated options. For now, I'm just going to talk about the three spreads I use the most.

One-Card Spread

Okay, it's not exactly a "spread" if there is only one card, but nonetheless, this is one of the simplest, easiest, and fastest ways to use a tarot deck. It can be quite useful if you need the answer to a basic question in a hurry or if the question involved is relatively uncomplicated and doesn't require a broader reading. It is best for questions that only need a yes or no answer,

with no further detail, although it can be used for any question in a pinch.

For instance:

"Should I _____ ?"

"Is _____ a good idea?"

Or you can simply pull one card each morning and ask: "What should I know for today?"

To do a one-card reading, you can either take the cards out of their box and spread them out facedown on a table, then pick the one that seems to call to you the most, or just pull one out of the middle of the deck at random. Sometimes the answer is clear. For instance, if you ask, "Should I go out on a date with the guy my sister is trying to set me up with?" and you pull the Devil card, I'd say that's a definite *hell no*.

On the other hand, sometimes the answer isn't quite that obvious and requires a little more interpretation. Then you can study the details of the picture to see if you can get a better idea of the answer. As always, listen to your gut and inner wisdom.

Three-Card Spread

If you need a little more information than you can get from one card but don't have the time or inclination to do a full reading, the three-card spread is flexible and easy to do. I sometimes do mini readings at events, and I can do a three-card reading for someone in five to ten minutes. If you are going to have some friends over who are all interested in the tarot, it can be fun to take turns doing three-card readings for each other. It is also

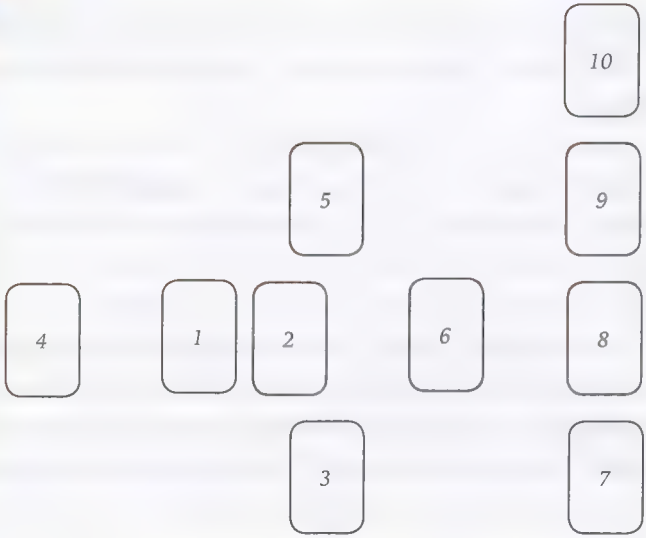
a good way to get more practice and become better versed in the cards without having to spend a lot of time doing longer readings.

The three cards used in the spread can stand for a variety of different elements. The most common is probably Past/Present/Future (that's the one I use), but it can also be done as Situation/Challenge/Outcome, Hopes/Fears/Possibilities, or any other combination you choose to apply to your issue.

Like the one-card spread, the three-card spread lends itself well to a daily journaling practice, and it is interesting to see how circumstances turn out and whether or not the results line up with your previous readings. You can also use runestones to do the same type of reading, then compare the result from the two.

The Celtic Cross

Probably the most commonly used spread is one called the Celtic Cross, which was created more than one hundred years ago by Arthur E. Waite. You may come across numerous variations, as different people have adapted this basic ten-card spread and changed it over the years. I do a slightly different version than the one I was taught, and I have seen many other versions. Tarot readers may lay the cards down in a slightly different order or give the card positions other labels than the ones I use. I'm going to show you how I do it, but feel free to explore other options or give it your own spin.



The Celtic Cross Spread

The Celtic Cross is a very useful spread; it's the one I do for all of my detailed readings. The ten cards give you just enough information without overwhelming you, and the spread is easy to read for patterns and correspondences. There is a very good chapter on how to use the Celtic Cross spread in Mary K. Greer's *Tarot for Your Self* book, which I mentioned earlier.

If you are doing a reading for yourself, it may be helpful to write down the meanings of the positions as a list (1–10) and then fill in the cards you get and your immediate gut reaction interpretation of them. Then you can return to the reading later, after letting it settle, and see if anything else pops out

at you. When I do readings for others, they sometimes write down the cards, ask to record the session, or take a picture with their phones. Any of these are reasonable ways of preserving the session so you can look at it again later if needed.

Deborah's Celtic Cross Spread

Card 1: Represents the querent/general environment and life at the time of the reading (place in the middle of the reading)

Card 2: The situation/issue/question/problem being dealt with (traditionally crosses the first card; place slightly to the right side of card 1 so you can see them both)

Card 3: Foundation of the situation/basis of querent's response to the situation/past/roots (place underneath cards 1 and 2)

Card 4: What is passing out of influence or had been important but no longer is (place to the left of cards 1 and 2)

Card 5: Influences from the outside/interactions with others, their effect on you and your effect on them/goals and ideals (place above cards 1 and 2)

Card 6: First future card/sometimes a warning of what the future holds if you do not change the path you are currently on/can represent the more immediate future/what you put out into the world (place to the right of cards 1 and 2, opposite card 4)

Card 7: How you see yourself/your conditions and attitude at the time of the reading (place to the right of card 6, at the bottom even with card 3; you will then place the next three cards above this card)

Card 8: How others see you/what you project* (place above card 7)

Card 9: Your hopes and fears for attaining the goal, which are usually two sides of the same coin (for instance, you hope for success and fear failure)/inner emotions/lessons to be learned (place above card 8)

Card 10: The future/outcome/final answer to the question asked (place above card 9)

After all the cards have been laid out, check the spread for patterns and repeats of suits and numbers. If there are any cards that didn't make sense when they were first put down, look to see if later cards made them clearer. If necessary, you can pick one or two additional cards for clarification, either by using the next card in the deck or by spreading the entire deck out in a sweep facedown and choosing the card that seems to jump out at you.

* What you project to others can be very different from how you see yourself, and if it is, you may want to ask yourself why your image of yourself is so different from how others see you. Are others seeing you more clearly than you see yourself or are you putting up a protective front and not allowing others to see your

true self? If either of these is true, this knowledge can be helpful in creating positive change. It is also good to know if you are inadvertently projecting an image of yourself that isn't the way you would like to be seen.

Conclusion

I have spent many years reading the tarot, both as a student and then, later, as a professional reader. It has helped to guide my life and, through my modest efforts, the lives of others. Also, it's way cool.

Working on this deck has also been cool—really, really cool. Each book I write is a product of my heart and my desire to share knowledge with others, but writing this one has been a singular joy. It helps that I was so excited about the project and that I had such amazing people to work with, most especially the deck's fabulous illustrator, Elisabeth Alba.

Elisabeth and I (along with editor Barbara Moore and innumerable other folks at Llewellyn) worked hard to make this deck both practical and entertaining, serious and amusing, deeply spiritual and intuitive, and yet easy to use and understand. It was, without a doubt, a labor of love by all those who

worked on it. It is our fervent hope that you may get many years of guidance, wisdom, and joy from this deck, learn the things you need to know, get the answers you desire, deepen your inner knowledge, and, of course, have fun.

From our fairy tale to yours, may all your endings be happy.